ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

S. R. SHARMA

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ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY
AND
CULTURE

By

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FERGUSSON COLLEGE POONA

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To

The Makers

of

Free India

PREFACE

Doing good work is difficult He who does it first does a difficult thing —ASOKA

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This little book has been written to meet an express demand 'Ancient Indian History and Culture' has been introduced none too soon by the University of Bombay in its new curriculum for undergraduate students Nevertheless, the dearth of suitable books on the subject has been felt by pupils and teachers alike as an embarrassing want The materials and literature for more advanced courses in Indian history, civilization and culture are not lacking What is in fact baffling to the beginner is the very abundance of these resources To make a satisfactory selection, without omitting anything that is essential, is a very difficult task Where there is so much of interest as well as importance "not to be left out', the task of the teacher becomes still more difficult. I have been faced with the difficulty of having to *describe not* less than to *prescribe* for my students Indeed the latter function is easier to discharge than the former It is to meet this practical need that I have ventured to give shape to this 'blue print', hoping thereby to help others who may be in a like predicament How far my effort will satisfy them is not for me to say All that I can frankly state is that I have spared no pains to make this brochure as useful as I could possibly make it to those for whom it is intended

All those who are acquainted with the nature of the subject will readily admit that clarity of treatment ought to weigh with the teacher next only to accuracy of statement, and the desire for fulness of factual narration should be severely governed by the knowledge of student's capacity for assimilation The First

University student is just a post-Matriculate who makes his *debut* into 'fresh woods and pastures new for the *first time — in many cases — through the medium of* English I have tried to keep these important considerations in view while writing this book If I have strayed away from these objectives, I shall be grateful to readers *who might care to bring these or other shortcomings to* my notice, so that I might effect improvements, if a revised edition is called for

I have tried to hold the balance even between the political, general and cultural aspects of our ancient civilization I have also tried to make the treatment, I hope, as concrete as possible without putting too great a strain on the memory of the reader The facts and dates contained *in the political narrative are not intended to be memo*rized This part of the book may be used merely as a scaffolding or foundation on which to build the tangible story of our civilization and culture, which, without such *a solid and firm basis, will merely fly like etherial clouds* through the mind leaving no trace behind The Appendices have been added with a view to making the study deeper and more substantial with the help of a bibliography, supplementary notes and maps An index of the main topics has been provided in order to facilitate reference to the various sections and subdivisions of the book

September 1947
Fergusson College
POONA

S R SHARMA

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" To us . .
The Originatress comes,
The nest of languages the
bequeather of poems, the race of old
The race of Brahma comes

* * *

" The past is also stored in Thee .
Thou carriest great companions
Venerable Asia sails this day with Thee ! "

WALT WHITMAN

ALLAHABAD PILLAR

Standard Type Obv

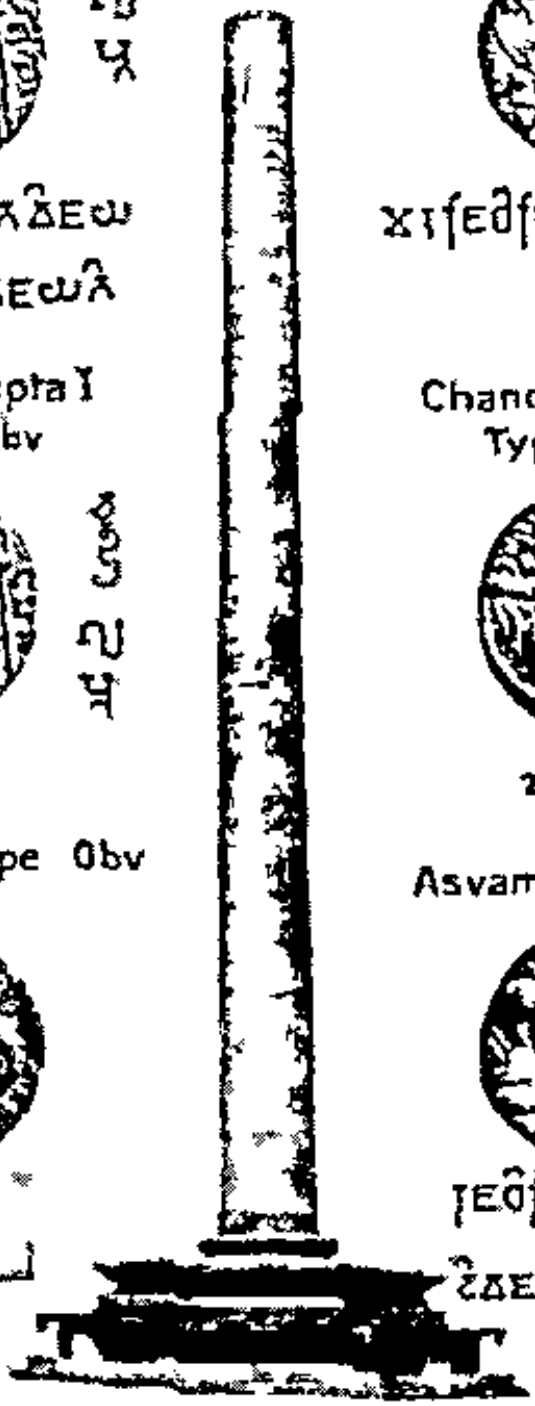
Lyr st Type Obv

Chandragupta I
Type Obv

Chandragupta I
Type Rev

Lion slayer Type Obv

Asvamedha Type Obv



Co rtesy of Prof R D Karma

I. INTRODUCTION

Ancient Indian history and culture is a subject which is as vast as it is interesting. At the present moment, when we have just recovered our lost freedom, its importance cannot be over-estimated. To a certain extent, it may be truly stated that we lost our independence in the past because we failed to appreciate the value of our great inheritance, and therefore proved ourselves unworthy of it. If we are not to lose it once again, we should understand our history and culture better. A nation resembles an individual in that it possesses a character and personality; sometimes this is also called its genius. The best and most natural development of a people can only take place along this line. Under foreign rule national genius inevitably suffers from frustration. Freedom gives us the opportunity for national self-expression which is also the fulfilment of national destiny. This cannot be achieved without a deep and correct knowledge of our past. An attempt will be made in the following pages to acquaint the reader with the main facts of our political and general history, as well as of our great and ancient civilization.

Outstanding Features: Civilization is the product of the interplay of human and natural factors. Scholars call these, *Race and Environment*. The most striking peculiarity of India is that it is a vast country, inhabited,

by a large variety of people Nevertheless, the result of their interaction has been a culture, which is distinctive in comparison with the world outside, but bears the stamp of unity, in spite of the natural and racial diversities obtaining within the country Unity in the midst of diversity is the hall-mark of Indian civilization or culture

The second important aspect of our history and civilization is its great antiquity Of course, the beginnings of the history of all peoples reach back to a remote past, but, in the case of several countries, that past is both hazy and uneventful Mere length of existence, therefore, does not make for distinction Some countries of the world, like ancient Egypt and Greece, for example, attained to great heights of civilization during the ages preceding the Christian era, but there was a limit to which they could grow. then they stopped and fell from the path of further progress Our record, on the other hand, is marked by continuity as well as antiquity. Our history, as authenticated by recent archaeological discoveries, is at least 5000 years old, and, during this long period of time, it has been more continuously distinguished than that of almost any other country, perhaps with the exception of China

The third outstanding feature of our civilization is the richness of its character and contents That is the reason why it has endured so long, while other civilizations, however glorious in their time, have not survived since Ours is not merely a story of the rise and fall of empires or kingdoms, but also a record of all-sided development and progress material, intellectual, moral and spiritual. Nevertheless, our ancestors did commit certain blunders, as the result of which India lost her political freedom They achieved great success in their arts and crafts, and, by their trade and commerce, produced

great wealth, in religion and philosophy they attained to heights not reached by any other people in the world, and made considerable progress in the field of positive sciences too Yet, socially and politically, we were out stripped by others That proved a great handicap, on account of which we were conquered and exploited by successive invaders In order to realize the full implications of these achievements and failures, we must go to the very roots and examine the entire process in all its phases and aspects

The Land and the People We hardly imagine that India was at one time a very different country from what she appears to us at present, geographically as well as ethnically Geologists, however, tell us that, innumerable years or centuries ago, there was a sea between the Vindhya mountains and the Himalayas, and that the existence of Lake Sambhar, the desert of Rajputana, and marine fossils all over the place, prove their conclusions Similarly, ethnologists tell us that, originally, the inhabitants of India were quite different from any we are acquainted with, and that they were akin to some of the wildest people now living in the Nilgiri hills and the forests of Central India and Assam These people are supposed by scholars to belong to larger groups called the Negrito and the Austric. We are further told that, when our land was differently shaped, it was connected with Africa in the west, and Australia and the southern islands in the south east There is a small group of scholars who are of opinion that, even in those earliest days, the Aryans did inhabit the Punjab, and cite evidence from the *Vedas* to prove that they were the original inhabitants of the region called Sapta-Sindhu However, we cannot enter into these controversial theories here For our purpose, it is enough to note that, since India assumed her

present geographic form, there have been three distinct types of people living in this country (i) The earliest known class of aborigines represented by the Todas of the Nilgiris, the Bhils and Kolis of Western India, the Gonds of Central India, and the Santals and Nāgas of the North-East (ii) the Dravidians of South India, and (iii) the Aryans There were also a few people of the Mongolian race who entered India through the north east, but soon got mixed with the rest As a matter of fact, most of the people of India today are a product of the *mixing* of the different races, who were either indigenous or came from outside at different times in our history In historical times, for example, even before the advent of the Muslims, Central Asian people, like the Parthians, Scythians, Sakas, Kushānas and Hunas, entered this country from the north-west passes and settled down in Rajputana, Gujarat and Maharashtra

Sources of Information We derive our knowledge of all these peoples and their past history, from the remotest times with the help of various sciences The most important of these are Ethnology, Anthropology, and Archaeology with its various sub divisions or branches Ethnology is the science which studies the races of mankind such as the Aryan, the Dravidian the Mongolian, etc Anthropology is divided into Physical Anthropology and Cultural Anthropology the former discovers the race by an examination of the details of the structure of the human body, the latter studies institutions It has been well said that Physical Anthropology studies man as an *organism*, and Cultural Anthropology studies man as an *organizer* Archaeology studies the relics of the past such as monuments inscriptions (Epigraphy), coins (Numismatics) and old scripts or writing (Palaeography) Such relics are found scattered all over

the country, and they are being taken care of by the Archaeological Survey of India. We will come across many examples of the valuable services rendered by this department to the historian, in the following pages. Another important source of information about our history and culture is the vast and ancient literature we possess in all languages: Vedic, Classical Sanskrit, Prākrit, North Indian vernaculars like Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati and Marāthi; and the various branches of the Dravidian or South Indian languages like Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayālam, Tuḷu, etc.

History and Pre-history: It is well to note the distinction between History and Pre-history, since we have to begin our story with the latter. For all practical purposes, we can say that Pre-history is the account of man and his doings of which we have no written records. We have, therefore, to depend here upon such light as is thrown by the Anthropologists and the Archaeologists. Some would suggest the use of a calendar as the criterion for dividing pre-history from history: in other words, according to them, history would be dated, and pre-history undated. However, we will find this distinction rather misleading in respect of our country. In India we have an abundance of undated records from which we are able to learn more of the life and doings of our people than what is known of even dated events and periods in some histories. In no case can we apply the criteria very rigidly. Though we have no written records of Mohenjo-daro, for instance, writing of some sort was used by the people of the Indus Valley. Likewise, though there are no dates recorded in our Vedic literature, the information we obtain from it about the life and activities of the Vedic people is so full and detailed that we may not call that period pre-historic.

Pre history is usually subdivided into three Ages: (i) the Palaeolithic or Old Stone Age, (ii) the Neolithic or New Stone Age, and (iii) the Age of Metals * These are rough and ready labels which really indicate the main stages through which man passed in the evolution of historical civilizations During the earliest of these ages, man was distinguished from the beasts of the jungle only by his capacity to make tools (of rough stone) and perhaps shape pottery, he obtained his food only by hunting and fishing, in addition to grubbing roots and fruits In the New Stone Age, he made his tools from polished stone, and also knew agriculture and weaving of cloth Greater progress was made during the Metal Age, which is again subdivided into the Copper, Bronze and Iron Ages In India the transition from the Copper to the Iron Age was not always marked by a bronze period, though bronze was used to a certain extent, there was no Bronze Age as such Iron was used in South India long before it was even known in the North While palaeolithic sites are rare, neolithic relics have been found scattered all over the country The biggest of the excavations of the Iron Age have been carried out at Adittanallur in the Tinnevelly district in South India. But the discoveries of the Copper Age at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, in the Indus Valley, have become world-famous We will describe and discuss the main results of these discoveries in the section dealing with Culture

Chronology The dating of events or happenings is a very important part of the study of history Facts

* Some interpose between (ii) and (iii) another Age—the Chalcolithic—marking the transition from the Stone Age to the Metal Age Likewise the period of transition from Pre history to History is called Proto history.

have to be located in time as well as place, if we are to be quite sure of their truth. Hence, Chronology and Geography have been rightly described as the two eyes of History. Yet, in very early times, we cannot be sure of either of these; and scholars sometimes differ very widely in such matters. For example, What was the original home of the Indo-Aryans? Does Mohenjo-daro represent Indian culture before, or after, the appearance of the Vedic Aryans; What is the date or age of the *Vedas?* Are our Epics (*Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*) and *Purāṇas* historical? If they are, what is their chronology? When and where did Kālidāsa live? The questions are endless. We also come across several Eras like the *Vikrama*, *Śaka*, and *Harsha* eras, which require to be fixed and co-ordinated. We will mention them in their proper contexts; but controversies arising out of the various hypotheses, put forward by different scholars, must be reserved for more advanced students of the subject. We will proceed on the basis of what is accepted by a consensus of learned opinion, rather than the hypotheses put forward by some specialists.

II POLITICAL HISTORY

NORTH INDIA

If our history is to be treated as a whole and not in fragments, it will be helpful to begin with the efforts at political unification made from the earliest times of which we have definite information Though this unity has been seldom achieved, it has ever remained an aspiration, and efforts towards its attainment have always been persisted in The greatest success in this direction was attained under the Mauryas, who were also the first rulers to provide us with a definite chronological foot-hold They created a pattern which their successors, for over a thousand years, tried to emulate but only with partial success The empires of the Guptas, of Srī Harsha, and of the post-Harsha period, possessed several great and attractive features, but they never attained the territorial extent reached by the Mauryas However, this does not mean that we had no political history before the advent of the Mauryas As a matter of fact, it is now established that our history, including political history, had its beginnings centuries earlier than it was thought by European scholars until recently Though the chronology of those beginnings is not yet definitely and finally settled, it will be unhistorical to ignore or overlook them

Political Beginnings All civilized societies are politically organized Even before the birth of civilization, as we recognize it today, there was not merely social organization into families and clans, but also some sort of a tribal polity What we mean by 'political' is that at least a number of wandering tribes had settled down on a definite piece of territory and evolved therein a system of

government, in peace and war, with an accepted code of laws written or unwritten The existence of dated records, or evidence of events like wars and invasions, is not a necessary, or the most important, part of political history They are of no greater significance than punctuation marks in our writing though like punctuation marks, they are indispensable to a correct understanding of the full meaning

Most of our familiar history books and standard works hitherto began with the invasion of India by Alexander the Macedonian in 326 B C Owing to the identification of 'Sandrocottus', of the Greek records, with Chandragupta Maurya, by Sir William Jones, they conceded that we might safely commence the political history of India from that time But later investigations have served to steadily push back the beginnings of our political history to earlier dates Investigations in Persian history and the Buddhist records have revealed the prior Persian conquest of the Indus region, the date of the Buddha's *Parinirvāna* and information about the contemporary Indian rulers, particularly of Magadha We will note the results of these, and other researches, in greater detail later To cut a long story short, a careful scrutiny of the *Purānas*, the Epics and the Vedic literature, has now established that our political history, as well as chronology, could be reconstructed with intelligible continuity, if not certainty, almost from the Vedic age The excavations of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro have laid the coping stone over these investigations by lending the support of unmistakable evidence of an archaeological character For our present purpose, we will presume that the Indus civilization was pre-Vedic

The Indus Period The absence of iron horse, no traces of which have been found in

tions, have led scholars to fix the age of Mohenjo-daro between *c* 3,500 and 2,500 B C. The monumental remains of a well-planned brick-built city, with a remarkable sanitary system of underground drainage, point to the existence of a public administration, without which the city could not have been so well constructed In it, there is no evidence of any great monarchs—such as the Pharaohs of Egypt—having ruled over the Indus region, no palaces and thrones, or crowns and sceptres have been discovered among the remains If anything, Mohenjo-daro points to a self-governing municipal organization The earliest antiquities of Asia Minor and Egypt, prior to the rise of powerful monarchies, make this surmise plausible If this is established beyond doubt, when the numerous seals and clay-tablets with inscriptions on them are finally deciphered, our democratic tradition may be considered to have commenced some five thousand years ago

The Vedic Period Though some Indian scholars have suggested a higher antiquity for the *Rigveda* it seems fairly certain now, that the Vedic age cannot be stretched beyond the limit imposed by the Indus civilization At least as the lowest limits therefore, we may accept the dates suggested by Max Muller viz 1200-1000 B C for the earlier, and 1000–800 B. C for the later Vedic *Samhitās*, 800–600 B C for the *Brāhmanas* (*Āranyakas* and *Upanishads*), and 600–200 B C for the *Sūtras* If this chronology is not taken too rigidly,* we have a workable frame of reference, in making our political history intelligible in its sequences According to A. B Keith,

* We shall probably have to date the beginning of this development [of the Vedic literature] about 2000 or 2500 B C and the end of it between 750 and 500 B C The more prudent course, however, is to steer clear of any fixed dates, and to guard against the extremes of a stupendously ancient period or modern epoch —J Winternitz

the language of the *Sūtras* shows a freedom which may not have been possible after Pāṇini's influence was fully established: the lowest date he considers plausible for Pāṇini is 300 B. C.

There is also a theory that the Aryans were autochthonous or native inhabitants of the Punjab. But there is greater reason to believe that they came from outside. Their immigrations were spread over several centuries. They were divided into a number of tribes, whose names are mentioned in the *Vedas*. The most prominent among them were the Bharatas, the Tritsus and the Purus. Geographical references indicate that, during the period when the *Rigveda* was composed, they were still confined to the Land of the Five Rivers. They called the land enclosed between the 'Sarasvatī and the Drishadvati 'Brahmāvarta', and regarded it as the most sacred part of 'Āryāvarta' or the country of the Aryans. Gradually, they moved southward and eastward, until they reached the Vindhyas in the south and Bihar in the east. In the later stages of this expansion, referred to in the *Yajurveda* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, old tribal names were superseded by new ones like the Kurus and the Pāñchālas. Nevertheless, the name of the Bharatas continued to be held in great honour. It is commemorated in the words *'Bhārata-varsha'* and *'Mahābhārata'*. Those who lived beyond the pale of Āryāvarta were called *Vrātyas* or outcasts; they were admissible into the Brahmanical fold only after ceremonial purification.

For the possession of the territory indicated above, the Aryans had to fight both among themselves, as well as with the Dasyus who were the natives of the soil. A famous 'battle of the ten kings' is referred to in the *Rigveda*. The great war between the Kurus and the Pāñchālas, celebrated in the *Mahābhārata*, may be regarded as marking a very crucial stage in those struggles. A

later poet (or poets) enlarged this theme, and produced the great epic we know. The internal political organization of the Aryan kingdoms will be described in a later section Here we may note that the political system of Āryāvarta comprised several kingdoms, small and big which strove for supremacy over the whole land The *Rajasūya* and *Aśvamedha* were ceremonials symbolic of their imperial ambitions and activities The names of famous monarchs celebrated in our epics find first mention in the Vedic literature Thus Ikshvāku is referred to in the *Rigveda*, Janamejaya in the *Brāhmanas*, and Janaka (as a contemporary of Yājnavalkya and Svetaketu) in the *Upanishads* The Sibis or Sivas had their kingdom in the n-w and the Uttara Madras in Kashmir The Madras were settled between the Ravi and the Chenab, while the Kuru-Pañchālas fought for the Doab or the 'Middle Country' Near them were the Matsyas in Jaipur or Alwar Kośala, Videha and Kaśi were to the east of the Kuru-Pañchāla territories Magadha (the kingdom of Jarāsandha) and Aṅga, in the extreme east, were considered distant and outside the pale, so also were the non-Aryan Āndhras, Pulindas, and Sabaras in the south

The Buddhist Period In the political history of ancient India, the Epic period is usually sandwiched between the Vedic and the Buddhist periods But a little reflection on the contents of the Epics and the *Purānas*, on which the accounts of the Epic period necessarily rest, will suggest that the material is better included in the Cultural rather than in the Political history In the first place, the *Itihāsa Purāna* literature was itself a product of the Hindu revival which followed as a reaction in the wake of the Buddhist Age Secondly, the Epics and *Puranas* draw the core of their substance from the Vedic literature, only elaborating the details with excessive

imagination. Thirdly, the dynastic lists of these popular works begin with personalities met with in the *Rigveda* and close with those who were contemporaries of the Buddha. For instance, we have noted before that Ikshvāku, Janamejaya, and Janaka were Vedic characters. The kingdoms and cities ruled over by them, together with their neighbours, are also named in the Vedic literature. The Ikshvākus were kings of Kośala, whose chief cities were Ayodhyā, Sāketa and Śrāvasti, the latter two of which are important places in Buddhist literature and history. In the time of the Buddha, Kośala was still a predominant kingdom in Northern India. Prasenajit was a contemporary of the Buddha, and Sumitra, who was fourth in descent from him, is mentioned in the Pauranic lists as the last of the Ikshvākus. With this, we may consider the Epic and Pauranic ages to have come to an end, though some of the Pauranic lists merge into the Buddhist, as we will presently notice. The *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*, which are the two main props of the Paurāṇic literature, are chiefly of interest, from the political point of view, as representing the story of the Aryan penetration of the southern peninsula, and the participation of the non-Aryan states in the great Kuru-Pāñchāla war in Northen India. If we suppose that the devastation wrought by that titanic struggle ended one epoch and paved the way for another, we may regard the appearance of Mahāvīra and the Buddha as marking the reaction from its repulsive violence. The centre of power and interest, during the Vedic age, was the Punjab; during the Epic period it was Kuru-Pāñchāla-Kośala in the 'Middle country' (U. P.); in the Buddhist period it was Magadha (Bihar).

In the post-Epic or early Buddhist period, we derive our information, as suggested above, from the *Purāṇas* as well as the Buddhist literature. That knowledge is also

supplemented by the Greek accounts, particularly regarding the north-western region From these sources we come to know of several new kingdoms and republics (or oligarchies) Among these were Gāndhāra and Kambhoja in the n w Sindhu Sauvira in the lower Indus valley, Saurāshtra in Kathiawar, Avanti in Malwa, Surasena in Mathurā Chedi between the Jumna and the Narmadā Asmaka on the Godāvari Vatsa about Allahabad Malla in Gorakhpur district, and the Vrijjis in North Bihar The last named constituted a confederacy of non monarchical states banding themselves together in order to withstand the menacing imperialism of Magadha If we leave out the earlier monarchs of Magadha, like Jarasandha and Brihadratha, mentioned in the Pauranic lists, we come to the Saisunāgas and Nandas who find a place in both the Pauranic and the Buddhist accounts Bimbisāra and Ajātasatru, of the former dynasty, were both contemporaries of Mahavira and the Buddha

Controversial as the dates of this period are, we may note that the Buddha appears to have attained his *Parinirvāna* in 486 (or 483) B C, and Mahāvira in 468 B C. Bimbisāra ascended the throne in 545 B C, when he was only fifteen years of age, and ruled till about 491 B C It is alleged that he was starved to death by his son Ajatasatru, who later on repented of his crime and became a follower of the Buddha Since the Jainas also claim these two rulers for their own, we may consider them to have been friendly towards both the reforming faiths The Saisunāgas were ambitious rulers Shifting their capital from Girivrija to Rājagriha they pursued a policy of all-round aggrandizement They annexed Anga in the east, and Kasi and Vaisali in the west They also entered into matrimonial relations with the surrounding princely houses, and even received an embassy from distant Gāndhāra in the western frontier of India Ajāta-

śatru's successor Udayin is remembered as the founder of Pāṭaliputra, at the confluence of the Sone and the Ganges. It was built in order to be better able to withstand the attacks from the king of Avanti, who was the next important ruler in Northern India. Eventually, Avanti and the whole of Madhyadeśa were conquered by the masters of Magadha, and Pāṭaliputra continued to be the most powerful and prosperous city of ancient India.

About the middle of the fourth century B. C., the Śaiśunāgas were overthrown by an adventurer of doubtful origin, named Mahāpadma Nanda. He and his successors together called Nava-Nandas—either because they were nine in number, or because they were 'new'—ruled over the Magadha empire until they, too, were superseded by yet another adventurer, viz. Chandragupta Maurya, about 323 B. C. This time, the new dynasty was destined to create, for itself and India, the most glorious record in history. But, before pursuing their story, it is necessary to have a glance at the western parts of Hindusthan, during the Buddhist period.

Irānis and Yavanas: We have referred above to an embassy from Gāndhāra to the court of Bimbisāra of Magadha. The occasion for it was, perhaps, provided by the aggressive activities of the Iranian (Persian) monarchs of the Achaemenian dynasty. Its founder, Cyrus, had conquered Babylon in 539 B. C., and his successors, Darius and Xerxes, are famous in European history for their invasions of Greece. On our side too the armies of Darius (522–486 B. C.) appear to have marched into the valley of the Indus, and annexed the Western Punjab to the Persian empire. The result was that the Indian satrapy (province) of the Irani empire yielded to them a tribute of 360 Euboic talents of gold-dust, amounting to more than Rs. 15,000,000. Indian soldiers, clad in cotton

fabrics, and riding on elephants were also seen in the imperial armies of the Persian monarch, during his invasion of Greece But the most important consequence of this was that, when the mighty Achaemenian empire was overthrown by Alexander the Macedonian, in 333-331 B C, his Greek phalanxes could not resist the temptation to follow up their triumphs with an invasion of India as well

Yavana is the Indian name for the Greeks, from Iovanes or Ionians just as India itself is a Greek name for our country, from the river Sindhu, which the Persians called Hindu, and their successors Indu Indoi were the people of the Indus region, since Anglicized into India and Indians This is a significant introduction to the far-reaching cultural results of the Yavana invasion of India, which we shall describe in another part of this book Alexander's Indian expedition covered about three years, 327–325 B C There were, at that time, numerous petty kingdoms, or principalities, in the Punjab, which were not united even in the face of the enemy While Ambhi, the ruler of Taxila invited the invader, Paurava, or Poros as the Greeks called him, offered gallant resistance Though defeated, he stood erect—above six feet in height—and demanded royal treatment from the conqueror Alexander had the magnanimity to reinstate him after receiving his formal submission Others committed *jauhār*, but could not prevent the further advance of the invader Alexander's progress was halted only by the unwillingness of his own followers to march beyond the Beas (Hyphasis) river So he was obliged to sail down the Indus and retreat homeward in 325 B C On his way back, the great conqueror died at Babylon in 323 B C. That was, also the year in which Chandragupta Maurya ascended the throne of Magadha in Pataliputra

The Age of the Mauryas: With the accession of Chandragupta, in 323 B. C., begins a new era in the history of India. He was the first liberator of India from all vestiges of the foreign yoke, and the founder of the first really historical and historic Indian dominion, which was both free and glorious in every sense of the term. Alexander had found the Indians lacking, not in valour but unity; that unity was now imparted by the Mauryas. Even in the conquered provinces, the people had not reconciled themselves to the loss of their freedom. In the wake of Alexander's withdrawal, one of his commanders left behind—Philippos by name—was murdered by an Indian.

no record of the details of these annexations to the Maurya empire Yet, the edicts of Asoka and other local inscriptions enable us to accept these boundaries as approximately correct With the exception of the Kalinga war under Asoka, we have no indication of any other campaigns led by either Bindusāra (son of Chandragupta) or by Asoka (grandson of Chandragupta) It will not, therefore, be wrong to suppose that all these conquests were effected by the founder of the Maurya empire, viz Chandragupta himself

According to Jaina tradition, Chandragupta retired to the Chandragiri hill, at Sravana Belgola in Mysore, and died there by voluntary starvation (*sallekhana* or *samādhi-marana*) in the style of the Jaina monks He was about fifty years of age when he abdicated in favour of his son Bindusāra who ascended the throne about 297 B C Chandragupta must, therefore, have reigned approximately for twenty-seven years (323–297) Bindusāra ruled from 297–273 B. C, and Asoka from 273–237 B C There is hardly any record of the events which must have taken place during this period The Greek ambassador Megasthenes came to the court of Chandragupta about 300 B C, but only a few fragments of his writings have survived Kautilya wrote a very important treatise on *Artha-śāstra*, from which we are able to gather much valuable information about the political and economic systems of that age The edicts of Asoka, found in the remotest corners of his vast empire, are also an important source from which we can form a clear picture of the character of the Maurya empire at its best Embassies were sent to distant foreign countries by both Bindusāra and Asoka From references to these, in the inscriptions, we are able to fix the chronology of the reigns, as well as to know the nature of the contacts between India and the outside world during the Maurya period.

In the internal history of the country, two events of great interest and importance took place in the time of Aśoka : one was his conquest of Kalinga, in 262 B. C., and the other was the meeting of the Buddhist Council in Pāṭaliputra c. 253 B. C. After the death of Aśoka, in 237 B. C., his dominions were divided among his survivors, including his grandson Daśaratha and great-grandson Samprati. The last of the family of the imperial Mauryas was Bribadratha, who was assassinated by his own commander-in-chief, named Pushyamitra, who founded a new dynasty of rulers called the Śungas, in 185 B C. The implications of these happenings, from the point of view of Indian civilization, will be discussed in the next section of this book dealing with Cultural history. Suffice it here to note that the political unity of India, achieved under the first three emperors of the Maurya dynasty, did not last long after the death of Aśoka, though his successors continued to reign in their home-province of Magadha until they were superseded, even there, by the Śungas, as mentioned above. India did not recover even a semblance of political unity until the creation of the Gupta empire, by another Chandragupta in 320 A. D. Meanwhile, we have to survey the conditions and happenings during this period of political disruption.

Śungas and Kanvas These two dynasties ruled over Magadha, in succession, from 185 B C to 28 B C. But none of these rulers, excepting Pushyamitra, deserves more than a passing mention Pushyamitra was a Brāhmana of the Bharadwāja *gotra*, tracing his lineage from the Vedic times. He was a great protagonist of the Brahmanical faith, and performed the *Asvamedha* sacrifice more than once during his reign of thirty-six years The Buddhist books describe him as a great persecutor of their sect, but we have to make due allowance for their sectarian prejudice against one who was avowedly a Brahmanical revivalist At any rate, there is unmistakable evidence, in the *stupas* and railings of the Buddhists at Bārhut, that they were erected 'under the sovereignty of the Sungas' One of the earliest conquests effected by Pushyamitra was that of Vidarbha This is reflected in Kālidāsa's *Mālavikāgnimitra* Agnimitra was the son of Pushyamitra, and governor of Vidiśa Yajnasena, a relation of a minister of the fallen Brihadratha Maurya, tried to set himself up independently as ruler of Vidarbha and regarded himself as a 'natural enemy' of the Sungas. But Agnimitra subdued him, with the help of his cousin Mādhavasena, and Vidarbha was brought under the suzerainty of Pushyamitra Meanwhile, the Yavanas, who had been kept out of India, since the time of Chandragupta, again entered the country, and tried to make capital out of the decline of the later Mauryas. But we learn from Patanjali, the grammarian (who was a contemporary of Pushyamitra), the *Gārgi samhita* and *Mālavikāgnimitra*, that the 'viciously valiant Greeks' were defeated and driven out by the Sungas from Mādhyamika (Chitor) and Sāketa (Ayodhya). According to the Tibetan historian Tārānāth, and the *Divyāvadāna*, the empire of Pushyamitra extended as far as Sākala

(Sialkot) We may, therefore, conclude that the Sunga empire at its best extended from Magadha to the Punjab, and from the Himalayas to the Narmada river But the history of the Mauryas repeated itself in the Sunga family also, and the empire of Magadha was again split up among several minor princes Finally, they were overthrown in Magadha by another Brāhmana named Vāsudeva of the Kanva family, about 72 B C They counted only a few successors and terminated their brief regime in 28 B C The real successors to these Brāhmana ruling families were the Āndhras

Āndhras and Kalingas Āndhras is the name given in the *Purānas* to a family of Brāhmana rulers who called themselves Satakarni or Sātavāhana This name appears to have been derived from their original home in the Bellary district Some have suggested its identity with *Satyaputtas* of Asoka s edicts and the *Setai* mentioned by Pliny They were called Āndhras in the *Purānas* because later rulers of the family extended their rule over Āndhradesa and actually retired into the Telugu country, between the Godavari and Krishna rivers when they were ousted from the western Deccan by the Sakas and Abhiras The first stronghold of their power was in Maharashtra where they have left many marks of their existence Their inscriptions are found in the Nasik and Poona districts as well as at Sānchi in Central India The caves of Pandav lena and Nānāghāt also bear their impress Simuka Krishna, and Satakarni, were the first three rulers of this dynasty Simuka was the founder of the line and is said to have overthrown the power of the Sungas in North India Sātakarni is supposed to have made extensive conquests and performed the *Asvamedha* twice Towards the end of the first century A D the Sakas temporarily eclipsed them in Maharashtra But

their greatest ruler, Gautamiputra Sātakarni, re-established Sātavāhana prestige and power, by driving out the Sakas, Pahlavas and Kshaharatas He appears to have conquered Gujarat, Saurāshtra (Kathiawar), Malwa, Berar, North Konkan, Poona and Nasik districts He was succeeded by his son, Vāsishthiputra Srī Pulamāvi, in 130 A D He established his capital at Paithan near Nasik, and according to the Junagadh Rock inscription, defeated Rudradāman twice Pulamāvi died about 155 A D The last great king of this family was Yajna Srī Sātakarni who ruled from 165–195 A D His inscriptions are found in the Krishna and Nasik districts bearing evidence of his rule having extended over the whole of the Deccan, from sea to sea Yet, under his successors, the Sātavāhanas, again and finally, lost their power, being overcome by the Abhiras in Maharashtra, and the Pallavas on the east coast

Another southern power to share with the Satavahanas the dominions of declining Magadha was Kalinga It is to be recollected that the conquest of Kalinga by Aśoka was an epoch-making event, inasmuch as, it induced that great monarch to eschew for ever war as an instrument of power it converted a ruthless imperialist into a 'Prince of Peace' to the eternal glory of our Motherland The extent of the slaughter and destruction wrought in that campaign also revealed the spirited character of the resistance The Kalingas reasserted their independence, no sooner than their conqueror was dead We do not know much about the history of independent Kalinga after its liberation, but an inscription in the Hathigumpha ('elephant cave') has yielded very valuable information about Kharavela of the Cheti family. Opinion is divided among scholars about the exact dates of the events related therein, though it is generally agreed that Khāravela was a contemporary of the Sungas and

Sātavāhanas. According to K. P. Jayaswal, Khāravela ascended the throne in 183 B. C. The inscription was engraved in the fourteenth year of his reign, and it describes events of the thirteen years preceding. The main facts recorded are that Khāravela reopened a canal cut previously by the Nandas of Magadha, but which had got silted up since. He excavated huge caves in the Udayagiri (Kumāri Parvata) hills for the use of the Jaina ascetics, and brought back from Magadha the image of a Tirthankara, which had been carried thither from Kalinga by one of the Nanda invaders; and lastly, he carried on wars all round and conquered, or defeated, the Pāndyas in the south, the Sātavāhanas in the west, and the Śungas and Yavanas in the north. Khāravela celebrated his victories by building a great palace, called 'Mahāvijaya,' which is said to have cost 3,800,000 (copper coins?). In its best days the kingdom of Kalinga included the modern province of Orissa, Northern Sarkars, and the district of Midnapore in Bengal. After the death of Khāravela Kalinga once more lapsed into obscurity, being eventually absorbed within the Śātavāhana empire.

Yavanas, Śakas and Kushānas:—Having noticed the history of what had survived of the Magadha empire after the death of Aśoka, in the eastern, central and southern divisions, we might now turn to the western provinces. From the end of the Maurya period to the dawn of the Gupta era, there was a series of foreign invasions of India from the north-western passes. Their accounts given in most of the books are very confusing, because they are too much crammed with unfamiliar names. We will confine ourselves here to the most significant among them, in order to provide an intelligible link between the two great creative ages in Indian history—viz. the Maurya and the Gupta ages—interrupted

by a dark period of numerous foreign incursions The earliest among these were the Yavanas or Greeks; next came the Saka-Parthians; and lastly the Kushānas Apart from references in the *Purānas*, we learn about them from the writings of the Greeks, the coins issued by their kings, and some inscriptions They added a new ethnic strain to our population, stimulated intercourse with the outside world, and influenced our culture in many other ways

We have noted how the eastern part of the empire of Alexander, the Macedonian, was inherited by Seleukos who was kept out of India by Chandragupta Maurya Under the successors of Seleukos, there was further disintegration of the Greek dominions, and Parthia (Khorasan) and Bactria (Balkh) were among the first to fall out Within the Indian border, nearest to them, was Gāndhāra (Kandahar) which was ruled by one Subhagasena, successor to Virasena, who had made himself independent soon after the death of Asoka The Bactrian Greeks, taking advantage of the weakness of the Mauryas, penetrated into the Indian border, which then included Afghanistan within it In 183 B C their king, Demetrios (Dattamitra), conquered a part of the Punjab, and assumed the title of 'King of the Indians.' He was the first Greek king to issue coins with bilingual legends (Greek and Kharoshti). We cannot definitely say what other conquests were effected by him in India, though according to some writers, he made Sākala (Sialkot) his capital, and included Sind and the adjoining territory in his dominions The most distinguished member of his family was Menander, celebrated in the Buddhist literature Strabo goes to the length of saying that he conquered 'more nations than Alexander.' In the Pāli work *Milinda panha* ('Questions of Menander') it is also stated that 'as a disputant he was hard to equal, harder

still to overcome, the acknowledged superior to all the founders of the various schools of thought As in wisdom, so in strength of body, swiftness and valour, there was found none equal to Milinda in all India He was rich, too, mighty in wealth and prosperity, and the number of his armed hosts knew no end' Even Plutarch, two centuries later, referred to the honour in which Menander was held in India His coins bear testimony to his having ruled from Kabul to the western parts of the United Provinces May be, he was the Yavana whose army penetrated up to Pātaliputra, which was saved only by the valour of Pushyamitra Sunga The successors of Menander were overpowered by the next wave of invaders, viz the Sakas

Śakas Parthians Pahlavas We may not think that these three names represented three different peoples If there were distinctions between them, they are not of material importance to our story. The Sakas were Scythians from Central Asia, even like the Yeu-chi and the Kushānas who followed later The Parthians were either pure Sakas settled in Parthia, or mixed with local people Pahlava is merely another (Iranian) name for the Parthians Their first great leader to enter India was one Maues or Moga He ruled over Gāndhāra and West Punjab, as his coins show. His successor, Azes, reigned from 20 B C to 20 A. D He was succeeded by Gondophares (20-60 A D) who was, perhaps, the greatest of them They all bore the title *Shah-in-Shah* or King of Kings An inscription of Gondophares—whose name in old Persian (*Vindapharna*) meant 'winner of glory'—at Takht-i-Bahi is dated the fifth day of *Vaisākha* of the year 103 (probably of the *Vikrama* era) According to Christian tradition St Thomas the apostle, visited India in the time of Gondophares The author of the *Periplus*

(an early Greek work) states that, in the lower Indus valley, towards the close of the first century A D, Parthian chiefs constantly deposed one another By such dissensions they made the way clear for the next body of fresh invaders from Central Asia, viz the Kushānas. Nevertheless, they left many a satrap (*Kshatrapa*) or provincial governor behind, who acquired more than a local reputation Some of them even assumed the title of *Mahā-Kshatrapa* or Great Satrap, and ruled over vast territories They were scattered about from Taxila, in the north to Konkan in the south, and Mathura and Ujjain in the east As examples, we may cite three of the most famous among them Nahapana, Chastāna and Rudradāman All of them ruled over Western India, though their capitals were in different places They shed their foreign character and settled down as Hindus We learn, from one of Nahapana's inscriptions, that his daughter, named Dakshamitrā, was married to one Usavadata or Rishabhadatta From the records in Pāndav-lena (Nasik) Junnar and Kārlē (Poona) we can infer that his dominions included a large part of Maharashtra From other references, we also learn that his suzerainty may have extended as far as Ajmer and Malwa His dates are approximated by scholars with 119-124 A D Chastāna, who ruled from Ujjain, is to be remembered chiefly because the *Saka* era beginning from 78 A D, is associated by some scholars with him as its originator His grandson, Rudradāman, became more famous, and ruled over a wider empire. His exploits are described in the Junagadh Rock inscription, dated 150 A D According to it, Rudradāman assumed the title of *Mahā-Kshatrapa*, having conquered the 'proud' Yaudheyas, and twice vanquished Sātakarni, Lord of Dakshināpatha His dominions included parts of Sind, Cutch, Saurāshtra Gujarat and the Konkan along the west coast, and Rajputana

and Malwa in the interior. In course of time, however, under his weak successors, all this was lost, either to the Abhīras, Śātavāhanas, or the newly risen power of the Guptas. Meanwhile, we will turn to the Kushānas, whose parallel history we have to trace from their advance into India from Central Asia.

Kanishka the Great : In the confused history of the dark age which followed the fall of the Mauryas, the figure of Kanishka stands out like a light-house in the midst of a surging sea. This does not mean, however, that we know all about that great monarch. It is on account of his great deeds, and his association with the birth of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, that he occupies a high place in our memory. Otherwise, even the dates of his reign are a subject of learned controversies, and we know very little about his predecessors as well as successors. He belonged to the Kushāna tribe, and the first monarch of that family to conquer territories in India was Kadphises. He appears to have swept out all vestiges of Greek and Śaka rule east of the Indus, up to the United Provinces; and his coins bear the *nandi* and trident of Śiva, thereby suggesting his religion. We do not know what relation he bore to Kanishka who came after him, either immediately or a little later. The suggested date of Kanishka is 78 A. D. Dr R. S. Tripathi supposes that the era beginning with that year commemorates Kanishka's accession, and that Kanishka's reign lasted for twenty-

Yarkand; within India, his inscriptions have been found from Peshawar and Rawalpindi to Mathura, Srāvasti, Kośāmbi, and Sārnāth He built Buddhist *stūpas* and like Asoka, convened a great Council of the Buddhists at Kundalavana (*in* Kashmir?) over which Asvaghosha, presided It settled a revised *canon* of that faith, and a copy of the new creed was engraved on 'sheets *of red* copper ' and deposited in a *stūpa* If these are ever discovered by some archaeologist, our knowledge of both Kanishka and *Mahāyāna Buddhism* will be considerably enhanced Great scholars like Asvaghosha, *Nāgārjuna*, and Charaka, are considered to have lived at the court of Kanishka The cultural aspects of this epoch will be discussed in another place, but we may here remark that, not merely religion, but art and sculpture, *too*, were greatly enriched during this period. The very names of Kanishka's *immediate* successors—Huvishka and Vāsudeva—are indicators of the cultural conversion which these foreign conquerors underwent Indeed, the transformation of *Hinayāna* into *Mahāyāna* reduced the partition between Hinduism *and* that sect to a degree of thinness that made the passage from the *one to* the other quite easy. The last known date of Vāsudeva is 177 A D After him the Kushāna empire gradually disappeared

Bhāraśivas and Vākāṭakas The *prelude* to the *rise* of the Guptas, in the first quarter of the fourth century A D, is marked by the careers of two ruling powers which may not be overlooked even in an introductory book like ours These were the *Bhārasivas* of North *India*, and the Vākāṭakas of the Deccan The former were a branch of the Nāgas, and the latter were of South Indian origin According to the *Purānas*, their power extended over Vidiśa, Padmāvati, Kāntipuri, and Mathura. Roughly, this corresponds to the valley of the Jumna and

Central India Vīrasena, the earliest of the Nāgas, is described as having 're-established Hindu sovereignty'. The Bhāraśivas are credited with the performance of no fewer than ten *Aśvamedha* sacrifices and are said to have been 'anointed with sovereignty by the holy waters of the Bhāgīrathī, which they had acquired by their valour'. Ganapatinaga, and some others of this family, are stated to have been conquered by Samudragupta, in the Allahabad pillar inscription of that prince

The Vākātakas, too, belonged to this period They had family ties with the Bhārasivas, as is denoted by references to the marriage of a daughter of Bhavanāga Bhārasiva with a son of Pravarasena Vākātaka The Vākātakas ruled over Central India, Central Provinces and Northern Deccan, during at least eight generations. The founder of the dynasty was one Vindhyasakti His son, Pravarasena I, performed the *Aśvamedha* According to an inscription in the Ajanta caves, the third ruler after him, viz Prithvisena, conquered Kuntala (Dharwar and Karwar districts) In the last quarter of the fourth century, Rudrasena II of this family married a daughter of Chandragupta II, named Prabhāvatiguptā. This lady acted as Regent to her minor son, Divākarasena, on the death of her husband, Rudrasena, for no less than thirteen years Her pilgrimage to Śrī Śailam, the famous shrine of Mahādeva in the Karnool district, is also mentioned The next king, Pravarasena II, ruled over the territory extending from Jubbulpore, in the north, to the banks of the Bhima in the south, and from Raipur, in the east, to the Western Ghats His successor Narendrasena's dominions included Kosala and Malwa, as well The last Vākātaka ruler of note is credited with having defeated the kings of Kuntala, Avanti, Kalinga, Kosala, Trikuta, Lāta, and Āndhra countries This makes one suspect the accuracy of the large claims made by medieval princes

in their inscriptions, regarding their wide conquests When the same kings are said to be conquered by successive rulers, we are to understand that such conquests were either incomplete, or only nominal In the middle of the sixth century the Vākātakas were superseded in the Deccan by the Kalachuris

The Age of the Guptas There are ups and downs in the fortunes of countries no less than in the lives of individuals It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that in a vast country like India, whose history extends over thousands of years, there were vicissitudes of the nature we have described in the preceding pages Since the sun of the great and noble Asoka set over the Maurya empire, there had followed the dark night of increasing anarchy or political disruption making it easy for foreign invaders like the Greeks, the Sakas and the Kushanas to dominate over this ancient land But it is equally clear that, though India was not strong enough to withstand some of those invaders, or to drive them out beyond her borders, she showed great capacity to assimilate and absorb them Thus, the foreigners soon got lost among the people of India, and thereby enriched her blood as well as civilization At the same time, the struggle against foreign domination stimulated Indian rulers to make fresh efforts at the unification and consolidation of the people The achievements of the Vākātakas may be considered to have marked an important stage in these reactions We will now see how, in co-operation with the Vākātakas and some others, a new power was established in India by the Guptas In some respects, they recalled to the minds of their subjects the ancient glories of the Mauryas and in other respects, created a fresh record for themselves These achievements were so great and varied that the period of Gupta rule has stamped

itself indelibly on our national memory, and it is referred to by all historians as the Golden Age of the Hindus. Nevertheless, the legacy of the Guptas is a part of our national heritage today when we have become a more composite people, without losing sight of our Hindu traditions.

The Imperial Guptas : Scholars generally make a distinction between the Imperial Guptas and the Later Guptas ; the latter may or may not have belonged to the same family. We might, perhaps, better speak of the Greater and the Lesser Guptas : from Chandragupta I (320-335 A. D.) to Skandagupta (455-470 A. D.) they were all great ; thereafter, until about the middle of the sixth century A. D., there were Gupta rulers in Malwa and Magadha, but most of them were inconspicuous. The history of the Greater Guptas is, also, better known because of their fairly abundant records : literary, epigraphic and numismatic. For instance, we learn about the grandfather of Chandragupta I—Gupta by name—from a Sanskrit drama written by a lady, and called *Kaumudimahotsava*. Another drama by Viśākhadatta, entitled *Devi-Chandragupta*, has given rise to an interesting hypothesis about a 'Rāmagupta,' interposed between Samudragupta and Chandragupta II. The great poet Kālidāsa, too, is generally supposed to have lived at the court of Vikramāditya (Chandragupta II). His description of the expedition of Raghu, in the *Raghuvaṁśa*, is considered reminiscent of the historic campaign of Samudragupta in the south. Inscriptions and coins, relating to the Greater Guptas, are also numerous and scattered over territories in which they once held sway. The most famous of the Gupta inscriptions is that of Samudragupta, on the Aśoka pillar in Allahabad, the details of which we will presently examine. On the coins of Chandragupta I,

we find, on one side, the figures and names of the king and queen—Chandragupta and Kumāradevi—and, on the reverse, a goddess seated on a lion, along with the legend: '*Lichchhavyah*' (the Lichchhavis).

Chandragupta I was not the first ruler of the Gupta family. We know from their records that Samudragupta was 'the son of the son's son of the *Mahārāja*, the illustrious [Srī] Gupta, the *son's son* of the *Mahārāja*, the illustrious [Śrī] Ghatotkacha; the son of the *Mahārājādhirāja*, the illustrious [Srī] Chandragupta [I]; and the daughter's son of the Lichchhavi [*Lichchhavi-dauhitra*] *Mahādevi*-Kumāradevi'. The nascent kingdom of the Guptas was strengthened by Chandragupta's marriage with the Lichchhavi princess, Kumāradevi, and he assumed the title of *Mahārājādhirāja*, which was not used by his predecessors Magadha and the territory of the Lichchhavis, Vesāli or modern Basarh in Muzaffarpur district, were contiguous, and the dominions of Chandragupta I appear to have extended from Prayāga to Pātaliputra He commemorated his coronation by the commencement of a new era (*Gupta* era) which started in 320 A D

As has been noted already, the Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta is the chief source of information about that great monarch It is a long epigraph, comprising 33 lines of prose and poetry of great literary merit, composed by Hariśena, who was a high official under Samudragupta Its hero was both a highly accomplished person and a great conqueror His conquests are enumerated, as well as classified, in the inscription In the first group of states which were in Āryāvarta (*Gangetic valley*), Samudragupta is said to have 'violently uprooted' Rudradeva, Matila, Nāgadatta, Chandravarman, Ganapati-nāga, Nāgasena, Achyuta, Balavarman and several tohers In the second group were kings of the forest country who acknowledg-

ed the conqueror as their 'master' but their territories were not annexed. It is not easy to identify all the persons and places mentioned in the narrative of this campaign, but scholars are now agreed that they were all in the eastern part of the Deccan and farther south down to Kānchi or Conjeevaram. Marching southwards, he conquered Mahendra of Kośala on the banks of the Mahānadi, in the region of Sirpur and Sombalpur. He then crossed the forest country south of Sonpur, in which only a certain Vyāghrarāja is mentioned by name. Reaching the Orissa coast, he defeated Mantarāja, king of Kerala, Mahendra of Pishtapuram, Svāmidatta of Kottura-on-the-hill, and Damana of Erandapalla. On reaching the banks of the Krishna, he was met by a confederacy of kings led by Vishnugopa, the Pallava king of Kānchi, 'who is the only one of these kings known from the inscriptions.' Samudragupta, obviously, turned back from this expedition, on account of increasing opposition from the southern rulers. He, therefore, contented himself with such tribute as he could gather, and returned to the north. But this brought him so much power and reputation as a conqueror that, the rulers of several states in the north came and voluntarily offered their submission to him thereafter. Among these were Samatata in the Brahmaputra valley, together with Dāvika and Kāmarūpa in the north and n.-e. of Samatata, respectively; Nepal and Kartripura (Karrapur? in Jullundur district), and the republican states of the Yaudheyas, Madrakas, Arjunāyas, Mālavas, and Abhīras. Beyond these were the Daivaputras, Śāhis and Śahānuśāhis, Śakas and Murundas, with whom Samudragupta maintained friendly and diplomatic relations.

Thus, the empire of Samudragupta covered practically the whole of Northern India, with the exception of the western parts comprising Sind, Kathiawar, Gujarat and

portions of Western Rajputana These were annexed by his equally eminent successor Chandragupta II Vikramaditya The inclusion of the Sakas and Saindhavas among those who did homage in one form or another, surely indicates the wide extent of Samudragupta's hegemony Even Simhala (Ceylon) and the islands (Greater India?) are included in the last category of the rulers who seemed to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Gupta emperor According to Chinese accounts, Meghavarna, king of Ceylon, sent a mission to Pataliputra in order to secure permission for building a monastery and rest house for the use of Buddhist pilgrims from Ceylon in Bodh Gaya The permission was readily granted by Samudragupta Hiuen Tsang who visited that place, in the time of Sri Harsha has recorded that 1000 priests lived in the Ceylonese monastery, which was magnificently built According to this Chinese pilgrim Meghavarna donated "all the jewels of his country for the building of the monastery at Bodh Gaya

An eminent historian has thus summed up the work of Samudragupta The organisation of the conquered territories reflects great credit upon the statesmanship of Samudragupta The Allahabad inscription clearly demonstrates that he was inspired by the vision of an all India empire But he did not attempt the almost impossible task of bringing the whole country under his direct rule At the same time he established a strong central authority, sufficiently powerful to check the disruptive tendencies of smaller states and their dissensions which had proved to be India's ruin in the past Solid and lasting foundations were thus laid for a great imperial fabric on which the successors of Samudragupta were to build in future Like Pushyamitra and others who followed since Samudragupta too celebrated a great *Aśvamedha* to commemorate his conquests His coins

are noted for their beauty of execution, and bear designs and legends which throw great light on his personality. In one, he stands with a bow and arrow, and the inscription reads: 'Having conquered the earth, the invincible one wins heaven by good deeds.' In another, he wields a battle-axe, and the legend says: 'Wielding the axe of Kritānta (god of death), the unconquered conqueror of [hitherto] unconquered kings is victorious.' Other coins show him as playing on the *vīṇā* or lyre, while there are also a few bearing on them the stamp of the *Aśvamedha* horse. According to Hariṣeṇa: 'He re-established many royal families, fallen and deprived of sovereignty, and his officers were employed in restoring the wealth of the various kings conquered by him. He was a great patron of learning, and, by his liberal munificence, removed the eternal discord between good poetry and plenty. In fact, he established his title of "King of poets" by various poetical compositions that were fit to be the means of subsistence of learned people.'

supposititious brother Kācha We may take it, therefore, that, if an elder brother existed at all, it had already become an esta blished practice in the Gupta family to nominate the really competent successor to the throne, in order to ensure the integrity and growth of the empire. From this point of view, Chandragupta II proved a very happy choice indeed In fact, under him the Gupta empire reached the acme of its glory, both in point of extent of dominions and cultural progress An inscription in the Udayagiri hill (near Bhilsa) states that Vīrasena, a minister or general of Chandragupta, accompanied him in his 'western expeditions 'seeking to conquer the whole world' Between 388 and 397 A D we do find that, in the western provinces, the coins of the Kshatrapas are replaced by those of Chandragupta II Another inscription of 412–13 A D speaks of an official of the same emperor having 'acquired banners of victory and fame in many battles' According to R C Majumdar "Everything thus indicates that Chandragupta's military campaign was planned, and the conquest of the Saka dominions was completed, during the closing decade of the fourth and the first decade of the fifth century A D." These conquests comprised the western provinces of Hindusthan, viz Western Malwa, Rajputana, Gujarat, Kathiawar, and possibly Sind If the identity of the Chandra of the Mahrauli inscription (on the iron pillar near Kutub Minar in Delhi) is established, then the conquests of Chandragupta II would extend up to Bactria in the west, and Vanga in the east Tradition also associates Chandragupta II with Vikramaditya of Malwa, the patron of the 'nine gems' including Kālidāsa, and the founder of the *Vikrama* era Vikramāditya was certainly one of the titles borne by Chandragupta II

It is interesting to note that the Gupta emperors sought to strengthen their position by means of matri-

monial alliances with the rulers of neighbouring states. We have already seen that Chandragupta I married Kumāradevi, of the Lichchhavi family, and assumed the title of *Mahārājādhirāja*. In like manner, Chandragupta II married Kuberanāgā of the Nāga family, and their daughter, Prabhāvati-guptā, was given in marriage to the Vākātaka king, Rudrasena II. An inscription of Kākusthavarman of the Kadamba family of Kuntala (Bombay Karnatak) states that his daughters were given in marriage to the Gupta and other kings. The Gupta king implied here, it is suggested by some scholars, was a son of Chandragupta II.

We have the impressions of the Chinese pilgrim, Fa-hien, who travelled through the Gupta dominions between 405-411 A. D., and they enable us to know a good deal about the condition of the Gupta empire during the opening decade of the fifth century A. D. But we will notice them in a later section. Chandragupta appears to have died sometime in 414 A. D., because the Bilsad inscription of 415–16 is of the reign of Kumāragupta I, the next ruler. Not less than thirteen epigraphic records of Kumāragupta have been so far discovered; but they are of interest only for fixing the chronology of the reign. One of them speaks of his 'increasing victory'. This, perhaps, is a reference to his work of consolidation; but, he, too, performed an *Aśvamedha* after the subjugation of his enemies. These were, propably, the Pushyamitras, a tribe in the Narmada valley. The Bhitāri inscription which refers to the Pushyamitras describes them as having 'great resources in men and money'. Kumāragupta may have died in the course of these expeditions, about 455 A. D. Though his son and successor, Skandagupta, ultimately succeeded in overcoming the enemies of the empire, it was not without considerable struggle. On one occasion, we are told, he

had to sleep a whole night on the bare ground while striving to 'restore the fallen fortunes of his family' The serious nature of the crisis may be realized from the remark that the victory was celebrated 'by happy men, even down to the children' The Bhitāri inscription also refers to the Hunas, and the Junagadh inscription speaks of the defeat of the *Mlechchhas* Though the empire remained intact until the death of Skandagupta in 467 A D there is no doubt that he had to fight hard, during his whole lifetime, for its existence Not long afterwards, the pressure of the Hūnas increased to such a degree that peace and security in the western parts of the Gupta empire were considerably jeopardized for several generations The halcyon days of Gupta glory were obviously over, though there were occasional flashes of revival under some of the later Guptas Their history deserves no more than a summary statement

The Later or Lesser Guptas The succession in the Gupta family after Skandagupta is somewhat confused. We can only guess that he must have been followed by Budhagupta, during whose long reign (467-500 A D), at least nominally, the suzerainty of the Gupta emperor was acknowledged from Bengal to Gujarat Feudatories, at first calling themselves governors, gradually assumed the title of *Mahārāja* and finally asserted their complete independence. The Maitrakas of Valabhi in Gujarat, Parivrājakas of Bundelkhand (Uchchhakalpa) and the Maukharis of Magadha, are illustrations of this After Budhagupta, there was probably a division of the empire between three Gupta monarchs Bhānugupta in Malwa, Narasimhagupta in Magadha, and Vainyagupta in Bengal The half-century (500-550 A D), during which they shared the heritage of the imperial Guptas was marked by a steady decline, both on account of internal troubles

and more, perhaps, on account of the increasing pressure of the Hūṇas reference to which has been made already

The Hūṇas were Central Asian barbarians who moved into Europe, as well as the bordering countries of India on the north-west. They were the Huns who under Attila, destroyed the Roman empire in the west In India they were known as the Ephtalites or White Huns We need not go into their earlier history, but only note here that, under Toramāṇa and Mihirakula, they became a great menace to the Gupta empire during the opening decades of the sixth century Toramāṇa was sufficiently Indianized to call himself *Mahārājādhirāja* A Jaina work, entitled *Kuvalayamālā* (composed c 778 A D) says that Toramāṇa lived on the bank of the Chandrabhāgā (Chenab) and enjoyed the sovereignty of Āryāvarta According to Hiuen Tsang, Toramāṇa's son and successor Mihirakula, had his capital in Sākala (Sialkot) 'Some centuries ago Mihirakula established his authority in this town and ruled over India He subdued all the neighbouring provinces without exception He hated the Buddhists and issued an edict to destroy all their priests through the Five Indias, 'to overthrow the Law of the Buddha, and to leave nothing remaining' Luckily, two great saviours arose in India at that time : they were Narasimhagupta Bālāditya and Yaśodharman of Malwa

In the Mandasor inscription, Yaśodharman claims that 'respect was paid to his feet by even the [famous] 'king Mihirakula' But we cannot say with certainty who this Yaśodharman was. He had his capital at Daśapura (Mandasor), and he might have been a feudatory or governor of the Guptas in Malwa Taking advantage of the confusion in the country, created by the invasions of the Hūṇas in the west and the [illegible]

suddenly appeared as a prominent figure in about 530 A D According to his Mandasor inscription, he 'conquered those countries which were not enjoyed [even] by the Gupta Lords, and which the Hūnas too failed to penetrate' This territory is described as 'extending from the river Lauhitya up to Mt Mahendra and from the Himalayas to the western sea' At first, the Guptas were unable to resist this tornado but ultimately, under Narasimhagupta, they appear to have overthrown both Yaśodharman and Mihirakula, if the identity of the traditional Bālāditya with Narasimhagupta is established beyond doubt An inscription of 543 A D, in north Bengal, suggests that the Guptas regained their lost hegemony

The Maukharis whom we have mentioned before, were an ancient family They lived in Bihar and U P Their eastern branch rose to power under Harivarman who called himself *Mahārāja* His great grandson, Isanavarman, son of Iśvaravarman (son of Adityavarman) became *Mahārājādhirāja* His records claim that he defeated the Gaudas the Āndhras and the Sulikas Later Gupta inscriptions refer to his victory over the Hūṇas One of his known dates being 554 A D we may take it that the Maukharis came into power after the downfall of the imperial Guptas The Later Guptas appear to have followed in their wake

According to the Aphsad inscription, Krishnagupta was the first ruler of this family No connection with the earlier Guptas is indicated beyond the vestige of the surname Contemporary records of the Later Guptas are available only from Ādityasena, who ruled over Magadha towards the close of the seventh century A D According to the *Harsha charita* Mahāsena-gupta of the same family was king of Malwa Probably, when Saśānka established an independent kingdom in Gauda it is con-

jectured, the Later Guptas shifted their centre of power to the west.

We are not sure of the nature of the relations obtaining between the various ruling houses mentioned above. Obviously they were sometimes antagonistic, and at other times friendly. We have illustrations of both in the information we are able to obtain about them. For example, Grihavarman Maukhari, son of Avantivarman, married Rājyaśrī, sister of Śrī Harsha of Kanauj (whom we will presently notice). He was murdered by the Gupta king of Malwa, and his widow, Rājyaśrī, was thrown into prison. When Rājyavardhana, another brother of the unfortunate widow, sought to avenge the death of his brother-in-law, he was lured into a snare by Śaśānka, king of Gauda, and slain by him. This is a sample of princely India during the dark night which followed the disappearance of the great and glorious Guptas.

The Age of Harshavardhana : Śrī Harsha of Kanauj (606–647 A. D.) was about the last of the great kings of ancient India. Under him, at least the whole of Āryāvarta, or Northern India, was not only brought under a single suzerainty, but the glories of the Mauryas and the Guptas, in culture and civilization, were revived to a considerable degree. Our knowledge of this period is also based on the secure foundations of contemporary coins, epigraphs, and the fuller accounts found in Bāṇa's *Harsha-charita*, and the writings of the greatest of the Chinese pilgrims, Hiuen Tsang, who was in India from 630 to 643 A. D. Out of these thirteen years, Hiuen Tsang spent eight (635–43) in the dominions of Harsha, and he provides us with a very intimate picture of the great ruler, as well as, the conditions obtaining in India at that time.

Though Bana claims a great antiquity for the Vardhana family, for our purpose, it is not necessary to go beyond Harsha's nearest ancestors His grandfather was Ādityavardhana, who ruled over Thanesar near Delhi which marked the site of the epic Kuruksbetra The marriage of Ādityavardhana with Mahāsenaguptā (sister of Mahāsena) of Magadha added to his dignity as well as influence. His son Prabhākaravardhana—father of Harsha, Rājyavardhana and Rājyasri—assumed the title of *Mahārājādhirāja*, and, thereby, perhaps, he indicated the increasing power and importance of the family He fought successfully against the Hūnas and Kushānas of Gandhāra, the ruler of Sind in the west, and the Gurjaras, Lāras and Mālavas, in the south The king of the last named sent his two sons, Kumaragupta and Mādhava gupta, as hostages to the court of Prabhākaravardhana at Thanesar. When Prabhākara died in 605 A D his queen, Yasomati, observed the time honoured *sati*

Rājyavardhan inherited his father s dominions, but was not destined to live long As we have stated above, his brother-in-law, Grihavarman Maukhari, having been killed by the 'treacherous king of Malwa', Rājyavardhana started on a campaign to avenge the calamity inflicted on his sister, Rājyasri, by his neighbour But this only involved him in another tragedy He was lured into an unarmed interview with Sasānka of Gauda and murdered Harsha was only about sixteen years of age then, but he was called to shoulder the responsibilities of the state (like Akbar later, on the sudden death of Humayun) The situation demanded a very capable man, and the young ruler, who was unanimously chosen by the free will of his ministers and people, proved worthy of the confidence placed in him Young as he was he had already served in the last campaign on the frontier against the Hūnas, along with his brother Rājyavardhana.

His immediate duty was to rescue his imprisoned sister Rājyasrī She had escaped to the Vindhya forests where, at the moment Harsha reached the place, she was about to enter the pyre, like her mother Yasomatī Dramatically surprised by her royal brother in that critical moment, Rājyasrī was prevailed upon to desist from self-immolation, and lived to be Harsha's helpmate and adviser in affairs of state

Harsha ruled for about forty-one years Out of these no less than thirty-seven appear to have been spent in campaigning Hiuen Tsang tells us that, during the first five years and more, Harsha 'went from east to west subduing all who were not obedient, the elephants were not unharnessed, nor the soldiers unhelmeted' His army comprised, in the beginning of these campaigns, 5,000 elephants, 20,000 horses, and 50,000 infantry These forces were enormously augmented before the close of his reign, so that at the end of it he possessed 60,000 elephants and 100 000 cavalry With the help of this great army, he made himself the unchallenged overlord of the whole of Hindusthan, from the borders of Assam to the n-w frontiers of India including Kashmīr and from Ganjam, in the east, to Sind and Gujarat in the west Bhāskaravarman, king of Kāmarūpa (Assam), owned him as his superior ally, and Dhruvasena of Valabhi (Gujarat) became the son-in-law of Harsha. The king of Tushārasaila (snowy mountains)—evidently Kashmir—submitted to him, and Harsha brought from there a tooth relic of the Buddha, which was deposited in his new capital of Kānyakubja (Kanauj) His last expedition was to Ganjam, in 643 A. D The only reverse he suffered was at the hands of the Chālukya king of the Deccan, Pulakesin II, about 620 A D In a fiercely contested battle, on the banks of the Narmada, which went in favour of the Deccan forces, Harsha was obliged

to acknowledge defeat Harsha died after a glorious reign in 646-7 A D We will survey the internal condition of his empire in another part of this book According to the Tibetan historian Tārānāth he exchanged embassies with the kings of Persia and China Unfortunately, all this glory was washed out by the anarchy which again overtook the country when the strong arm of this extraordinary monarch was removed by death

The Last Phase in North India In the preceding pages we have confined our attention exclusively to the political history of North India with only occasional or casual references to what was happening in the Deccan, mainly in relation to the North Indian powers We have also to turn to the political history of the South But, before undertaking that survey we will complete our story of the North down to 1000 A D when a new chapter in our history opened with the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni

When the sun sets, the stars begin to appear the sun is one but the stars and planets are numerous Occasionally, also the moon waxes and wanes in the darkness of the night This was what was happening on the political sky of India too when the major luminary of the Vardhanas disappeared beyond the horizon of Hindusthan. It is not necessary for us to attempt a complete chart of all the lesser lights that followed in the wake of Harsha We will obtain a clearer picture of the situation if we take note of the most outstanding features instead of getting lost amidst details

Harsha was a contemporary of Muhammad the Prophet of Islam That newly founded faith was a mighty force which was to deluge India only a few centuries later The intervening period of about three centuries and a half, was fateful from this point of

theless, during the interval, India was torn by internal dissensions which undermined her capacity to defend herself against possible invaders Kanauj still continued to be the most important political capital of Hindusthan, until it fell into the hands of the Muslims Its greatness was maintained by the Pratihāras through a succession of relatively able rulers Rājyapāla, the last of the dynasty, was put to death by the Hindu confederates who had banded themselves together to resist Mahmud of Ghazni, because Rājyapāla betrayed their cause by his submission to the conqueror (*c.* 1020 A. D) His son, Trilochanapala, died a fugitive in 1027. Nevertheless, the history of this great family of rulers is worthy of special attention, because they struggled persistently to restore the lost unity of Hindusthan, and, at times, came very near to success But we will appreciate their character better, perhaps, if we cast a glance at the rest of the country for a while

Kāmarūpa To begin with the east, we have noted that Bhāskaravarman was a contemporary of Harsha and king of Kāmarūpa or Assam His capital was at Prāgjyotishapura, one of the renowned cities of ancient India Bhāskaravarman made peace with Harsha, because he was afraid of his hostile neighbour Sasānka, king of Gauda Local tradition carries the ancestry of the Kāmarūpa kings to the mythical Naraka, who is supposed to have lived about 2,700 B. C But the first definite historical reference we get to the rulers of Assam is in the Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta Kāmarūpa is alluded to therein as the frontier kingdom which did homage to him. Hiuen Tsang visited Kāmarūpa in 643 A D When Bhāskaravarman died, about 650 he was succeeded by a feebler line of rulers, who ultimately submitted to the Pālas of Bengal,

Nepal. On the northern frontier of Hindusthan was another independent kingdom in the Himalayas, viz Nepal. It has retained its independence to this day on account of its situation. Its relations with Tibet and China have been at least as intimate as with India. The Nepalese are racially a mixture of various stocks, and in religion also, they stand between Buddhism and Hinduism. Asoka visited Nepal and built there the city of Lalitapātan, and his daughter remained there as a Buddhist nun. Samudragupta counted the ruler of Nepal among his tributaries. In fact, the Lichchhavi Kumāradevi—mother of Samudragupta—belonged to the then ruling family of Nepal. For a time, Nepal went under Tibetan domination, but became finally independent again in 879 A D with which the Nepalese began a new era.

Kashmir: Farther west was the kingdom of Kashmir, ruled over by the Karkotaka dynasty. Hiuen Tsang visited it in 631-3 A. D. We have also noted that Harsha brought from Kashmir a tooth-relic of the Buddha. Before that, it had formed part of the empires of Asoka, Kanishka and the Hūnas. The Karkotakas were superseded by the Utpalas, whose first ruler was Avantivarman (855-83 A D). He was a great and wise king. Instead of indulging in foreign wars, he devoted himself to internal prosperity. His clever engineer, Suyya, drained the marshes and protected the valley from avalanches. His name is still preserved in Sopur or Suyyapura. The Utpala dynasty, too, came to an end in 939 A D. The later history of Kashmir is full of troubles and oppression. It is also marked by the disgusting orgies of queen Didda and her favourites, until her death in 1,003 A. D. A poetic history of Kashmir is contained in the *Rājatarangini* of Kalhana, which will be noticed further in another

section The last or Lohara dynasty of rulers helped the Sāhis of Gāndhāra in resisting the increasing pressure of the Muslim invaders

Gāndhāra Ancient Gāndhāra was in the Kabul valley It had to bear the brunt of all the foreign invasions from the earliest times The Aryans entered the Punjab through that region. So did the Persians, the Greeks, the Sakas, Kushānas and the Hūnas Now it was the turn of the Turks At the end of the ninth century A. D, the Brāhmana minister of the last of the old Sāhi rulers overthrew his master, and usurped the throne From Kalhana we learn that the name of this usurper was Kallar, and that with him began the new Brahmana-shāhi dynasty. Bhima of this family was the grandfather of the notorious queen Didda of Kashmir, above referred to The struggle against the Ghaznavid invaders was carried on with great pertinacity by Jayapāla a descendant of Kallar Arab writers refer to him as 'ruler of Hindusthan' He fell back from Kabul to Bhatinda, in the modern Patiala state, and organized a grand confederacy of Hindu kings to resist the invader But this proved futile Jayapāla, being defeated on the battlefield, committed *jauhār*, while his son, Ānandapāla, and grandson, Trilochanapala, continued the struggle gallantly for sometime longer Nevertheless the Muslim advance could not be prevented It had been checked and delayed however, for nearly three centuries already, by the Gurjara-Pratihāras of Kanauj whom we have mentioned before

Sind As is well known the first entry of the Muslims was in Sind, in 712 A D Previously Sind had been occupied by the Sakas and Kushānas Before the time of the Arab invasion, it was ruled for 137 years by

The Paramāras, who were responsible for the destruction of Anhilwāra, belonged to a family that originally lived at Mt Abu. We learn about them from their inscriptions, as well as literary works like the *Navasāhasāṅka-charita* of Padmagupta. They conquered Malwa, early in the ninth century, and produced a succession of warlike rulers. One of them, called Simhabhata or Simhaka, plundered the lord of Mānyakheta in 972 A. D. according to Dhanapāla's *Paiyalachchi*. His son, Munja, fought against the Karnatakas, Lātas, Kalachuris, and—so it is claimed—even the Keralas and Cholas. The last two constitute too extravagant a claim, particularly as we know that, when Munja attempted to make a forced entry into the Chālukya territory, crossing the Godavari, he was taken captive by the Chālukya king, Tailapa II, and put to death in 995 A. D. The greatest of the Paramāras of Malwa was Bhoja. Though he fought against the Turushkas, Gurjaras and Chedis, successfully, he was defeated by another Chālukya prince, Jayasimha III, in 1019-20. He reigned from 1010 to 1065.

Kalachuris : Among the smaller kingdoms, noticed above, was Chedi, ruled over by the Kalachuris. They were an ancient family, known also as the Haihayas. They used an era of their own, dating from 249 A. D. They are mentioned in the Chālukya records of the sixth and seventh centuries. Later rulers of that family traced their

five kings of the Rai dynasty, in succession The last of them named Rai Sāhasi was succeeded, on the throne, by his Brāhmana minister Chach, who married his widowed queen, and founded a new dynasty of his own. Chach lived in the time of Hiuen Tsang who describes him as 'a Sūdra and a Buddhist'. Dahir, who fought against Muhammad bin Qasim was the last ruler of the Chach family Thereafter, the Arabs conquered the whole of Sind and Multan, but their further expansion was held by the Chāvadas and Solankis of Gujarat and the Gurjara-Pratihāras

Gujarat: The power of the first of these kingdoms was established by one Vanaraja, who built the city of Anhilwāra in 765 A D, The last Chāvada king was slain in 961 A D by his own son-in-law and nephew Mularāja (as Allauddin Khalji did later with Jalaluddin at Delhi), who became the founder of the Chālukya or Solanki dynasty According to Jaina histories, Mūlarāja was a great conqueror, and he waged war all around He took the 'cow eating barbarian' ruler of the Abhiras prisoner, because he used to tamper with the pilgrims to the temple of Somanāth at Prabhāsa After his conquests, Mūlarāja devoted himself to good works, and ended his life on the funeral pyre in 996 A D Bhima I, who came to the throne in 1010, was also a great warrior, and invaded Sind, but during his absence, Anhilwāra was attacked and destroyed by Kulachandra, a general of the Paramāra king, Bhoja of Malwa This event was so much burnt into the memory of the people that the 'sack of Anhilwara,' became as proverbial as that of Chitor later at the hands of Akbar. A greater tragedy was soon to follow. Somanāth was desecrated and plundered by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1024 A D.

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Gurjara-Pratihāras It is against this confused background of the distracted state of North India so far described, that we must view the uniqueness of the achievements of the Gurjara-Pratihāra rulers of Kanauj The Gurjaras—from whom Gujarat or Gujara-deśa derives its name—are supposed to have come into India in the wake of the Hūnas They are first mentioned as a separate people in the *Harsha-charita* of Bāna In it, we are told that Harsha's father, Prabhākaravardhana, was a terror to the Hūnas Gurjaras, Lātas and Mālavas Hiuen Tsang refers to their kingdom, which must have had Bhinmal as its capital The Pratihāras were the most important branch of the Gurjaras One of their families ruled from Broach in southern Gujarat, another set itself up in Jodhpur, while a third settled in Malwa The last was founded by Nāgabhata I, who ruled from *c* 725 to 740 A D Much light is thrown over the Gurjaras of Malwa, or Avanti, by various contemporary sources A Jaina work entitled *Harivamsa*, finished in 783-4 A D speaks of Vatsarāja of Avanti; while the Sanjān plates of Amoghavarśha Rāshtrakuta, 871 A D, also allude to another Gurjara ruler of Ujjain The Gwalior inscription of Bhoja definitely traces the origin of his dynasty's greatness to Nāgabhata who defeated the Mlechchas or Arabs The Arab historian Bilādhuri also admits that, while the invaders conquered Jurz (Gujarat), and Barus (Broach), they were not so successful against Uzain (Ujjain) and Maliba (Malwa) Even the Jodhpur branch of the Gurjaras was able to preserve its successful provinces from Arab encroachments

From the time of Vatsarāja of Avanti (775-800 A D) there was a three-cornered struggle between the Gurjaras, Palas and Rāshtrakutas for the hegemony of North India According to the Sanjān plates of Amogha-

varsha, already referred to, the founder of the Rāshtrakuta power, conquered Avanti, and forced its king to serve as a door-keeper at a sacrifice. Vatsarāja and Nāgabhata II of the Gurjara dynasty fought against the Pālas of Bengal, but Govinda III Rāshtrakuta once more advanced into Malwa, and defeated Nāgabhata. The last named was succeeded by Raṇabhadra, in 832, and he by Mihirabhoja who had a long reign of fifty years (840–90 A. D.). He made Kanauj his capital, and carried on constant wars with his neighbours and rivals. He and his son, Mahendrapāla (890-908), succeeded in dominating over both the Pālas of Bengal and the Chāndelas of Jejakabhukti (Bundelkhand). Under them the Gurjara-Pratihāra empire extended over the larger part of North India, from the Punjab to Bihar. But ultimately, it succumbed to the constant pressure exerted upon it from all sides; the Arabs and Turks from the west, the Rāshtrakutas and Chāndelas from the south, and the Pālas from the east. We have already referred to the fate of Rājyapāla, the last of the Gurjara-Pratihāras, during the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni, in 1024 A. D. Thus passed away the last bulwark of Hindu resistance to the Muslim advance in India, during nearly three-hundred years.

Chāndelas and Pālas: The story of the Rāshtrakutas, who were friendly with the Arabs, will follow at a later stage. A few facts about the Chāndelas and Pālas, who contributed to the downfall of the Gurjaras, may be noted here. The Chāndelas were of Gond origin. Their power was established by Nannuka who drove away the Pratihāras from Chattarpur, in Bundelkhand, early in the ninth century. A later successor, named Harshadeva, of this dynasty, in the first quarter of the tenth century, considerably

enhanced the power and prestige of the family His son, Yaśovarma (930–50) conquered Kālinjar, one of the most renowned fortresses of medieval India He also built the famous Vishnu shrine of Khajuraho in Central India His son, Dhanga, who reigned for fifty years (950–99), joined the Hindu confederacy for the defence of Hindusthan under Jayapāla His son Ganda, was responsible for the assassination of Rājyapāla of Kanauj, as a penalty for his submission to Mahmud of Ghazni The Chāndelas, along with their other confederates, consequently fell victims to the invader's revenge

The Pālas of Bengal produced a longer succession of able rulers than most other provincial dynasties They were Buddhists and patrons of art and literature, yet they, also, created a martial record of continuous warfare and conquest of territories, like the rest. Their founder, Gopāla, was chosen by the people to save them from *matsyanyāya* or anarchy.' He appears to have reigned from c. 765 to 770 A D His son, Dharmapāla, proved to be greater than his father, and not only ruled longer (770-815) but carried his victorious arms up to Kanauj There he overthrew the Gurjara king, Indrāyudha, and put Chakrāyudha in his place. But that triumph was shortlived At first Vatsarāja and Nāgabhata of the Pratihāra dynasty, and then Govinda III of the Rāshtrakuta family, turned the tables against the Pālas, though they reasserted themselves against their rivals, time and again, under very able rulers like Devapāla (815–54 A D) and Gopāla II We do not know the exact dates of the latter king, but he appears to have reigned for nearly sixty-six years. His grandson, Mahīpāla I, also ruled from about 990 to 1040 A D During his time, Bengal was overrun by the great Chola emperor, Rājendra, who proudly assumed the title of *Gangavijayi* or *Gangaikonda*, because he led his army to the mouth of the Ganges A

similar exploit was made by the Rāshtrakuta Indra III, who claimed that his horses were bathed in the Ganges where that river joins the sea. But Mahīpāla recovered from the attacks of the southern invaders, and seems to have checked their further advance in 1020 A. D.

DECCAN AND SOUTH INDIA

As noticed above, the political unity of North India, which was lost after the death of Harshavardhana, was never effectively recovered even by the Gurjara-Pratihāras for long, though they held the advancing tide of the Muslim invaders until the beginning of the tenth century A. D. We will now turn to the political history of the Deccan and South India during the corresponding periods. It will be convenient to survey the kingdoms of the Deccan before we proceed farther south into the peninsula. It is to be remembered that, while the latter represents the purely Drāvidian, the former includes various elements in combination with the natives of the Deccan, as well as Aryan and non-Aryan immigrants from the north.

Early History of the Deccan: By the Deccan we here mean the country south of the Vindhyas, extending to the south as far as the plateau of Mysore, and enclosed between the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. The name is derived from the Sanskrit 'Dakshinapatha' by which the Aryans of Āryāvarta, or 'Uttarapatha,' understood the land across the Vindhyas on their right, as they spread over the Gangetic plain, coming from the Punjab. According to South Indian traditions, the sage Agastya was the pioneer of Aryan civilization in the land of the Dravīdians. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* contains references to the Āndhras, Pundras, Pulindas and Śabaras, who were peoples inhabiting the

Deccan The great Sanskrit grammarian Pāṇini, too, refers to the Kalingas, while his commentator, Kātyāyana, speaks also of the Pāndyas and Cholas Patanjali in the second century B C, mentions Mahishmati, Vidarbha, Kānchipura, and even the more distant Kerala We have also stated before that the *Rāmāyana represents* the southward expansion of the Aryans down to Ceylon According to Dr R G Bhandarkar, ' Before 250 B C they had become familiar with the whole country down to Tanjore and Madura

The first definite landmark in the political history of the Deccan and South India is found in the inscriptions of Asoka, which have been found as far south as Siddapura in Mysore Tradition also alludes to Chandragupta Maurya having died at Chandragiri, in the same province There were minor ruling families of the Mauryas in the south, even in later times The next prominent extension of the imperial arms of Magadha, as we have noted, was the southern expedition of Samudragupta as far as Kanchi On the other hand we have witnessed that the Deccan was ruled, in the early centuries of the Christian era by the Kshatrapas, the Sātavāhanas or Āndhras, the Vākatakas and the Abhiras We will now deal with their successors the Kadambas, the Gangas, the Chālukyas, the Pallavas and the Rāshtrakutas These ruled over the whole, or parts, of the Deccan, either in succession, or together as contemporaries, sometimes as rivals and enemies, and at other times as friends and allies However, it will make for clarity if we take them up one after another The dates mentioned will serve to co-ordinate them chronologically On account of the conflicting claims put forward by most of them, as to their territorial conquests, in their inscriptions, it is difficult to know the exact limits of the kingdoms ruled over by them

The Kadambas : These were a family of Brāhmaṇas of the Mānavya *gotra*, describing themselves as Hāritiputras. Some scholars think that they were of North Indian origin. Mayuraśarma (*c.* 340–60 A. D.) was their founder. The traditional account of the rise of the Kadambas is contained in one of their best known inscriptions, situated at Talgunda in Mysore. Although they were Brāhmaṇas, they soon assumed the Kshatriya surname of Varma, to suit their political and martial ambitions. Their greatest rivals and enemies were the Pallavas of Kānchi. Kākusthavarman was, perhaps, their best king. He gave his daughters in marriage to important princes, like those of the Gupta and Ganga families. He lived about the middle of the fifth century A. D. (425–50). His capital was in Banavāsi, in North Kanara district. Later rulers changed it to Hālsi in Belgaum district: for some time it was also at Uchchangi, in the Chitaldurg district of Mysore, and in Goa. Thus, we may presume that the dominion of the Kadambas, at its widest, extended from North Kanara and Belgaum to Northern Mysore. Though petty princes of the family continued to appear until very much later, the Kadambas, as independent rulers of any consequence, were ecclipsed by the rise of the Chālukyas of Bādāmi (Bijapur district).

The Gangas : The Gangas of Kolar and Talakād, in Mysore, were another small but important family of rulers in the heart of Karnatak, who gave a good account of themselves during the early medieval period. Their beginnings are traced to the second century A. D., and when the main line failed in Mysore, they carried on with their branch family in Kalinga, known as the Eastern Gangas. The latter ruled over the territory extending from Orissa, in the north, to Ganjam and Vizagapatam in the south. The Gangas of Talakād were

of the Kanvayāna *gotra*, but proved to be great patrons of Jainism. In fact, they attributed the foundation of their power to the *blessings of a Jaina saint*, named Simhanandi, who advised their founders, Dīdiga and Mādhava · 'If you fail in what you promise, if you dissent from the *Jina-sāsana*, if you take the wives of others, if you are addicted to the spirits or flesh, if you associate with the base, if you give not to the needy, if you flee in battle—your race will go to ruin' Evidently the good rulers of the Ganga family avoided these forbidden things for quite a long time, for they continued to prosper until about the beginning of the eleventh century. Their inscription goes on to state 'With Nandagiri as their fort, Kuvalāla [Kolar] as their city, the 96,000 land [Gangavādi] as their country, victory as their companion in the battle-field, Jinendra as their God, and Jaina-*mata* as their faith,' they continued to rule from Marandale (?) in the north, Tondinad in the east, and the ocean on the west, to the Kongu country in the south

The title of *Dharma-mahārājādhirāja*, borne by the Ganga rulers, was justified alike by their patronage of religion, literature and art, and their prowess in war The great Sanskrit poet, Bhāravi, and the renowned Jaina scholar, Pūjyapāda, lived at the court of Durvinīta, who himself wrote a learned commentary on the *Kirātārjuniya* of Bhāravi He must have, therefore, lived in the first half of the seventh century Though the Gangas were obliged to own the suzerainty of the Chālukyas they continued to resist the Pallavas, on the one side, and the Rāshtrakutas on the other In the time of Srī Purusha, whose reign ended about 776 A. D, the kingdom was so prosperous that it was known as Sri Rājya Under Rachamalla Satyavākya IV, c 977 A D, his general, Chāmunda Rāya executed the colossal image of Gomata

(57½ feet in height) at Sravana Belgola, which continues to attract admiring sight-seers even now

The Gangas of Talakād were conquered by the Cholas of South India, about 1004 The later Gangas of Kalinga called themselves Gajapatis, and one of their kings, Rājarāja, married a daughter of the Chola king Rājendra-deva, about the first half of the eleventh century The dynasty continued to exist until its subjugation by the Muslim conquerors

The Chalukyas There were three ruling families of the Chālukyas, which ruled with their capital, respectively, in Badāmi, Kalyāni and Vengi They are generally known as the Early, Western, and Eastern Chālukyas Like the Kadambas, the early Chālukyas also described themselves as Hāritiputras of the Mānavya *gotra* The Varaha was their emblem The dynasty was founded by one Jayasimha His son, Pulakeśin I, who came to the throne about 550 A D, made Vātāpi or Bādāmi (in the Bijapur district) his chief city He was succeeded by Kīrtivarman who extended the Chālukya kingdom over Northern Konkan and North Kanara But the greatest of the early Chālukyas was Pulakesin II, who ruled from about 608 to 642 A D We have already spoken of his victory over Harshavardhana, on the banks of the Narmada, about 620, by which the conqueror of North India had to acknowledge the sovereignty of Pulakesin in the Deccan From 611 to 634 Pulakesin was strenuously engaged in establishing his suzerainty in the south He succeeded in holding his own against the Rāshtrakutas, the Kadambas, the Gangas, the Mauryas (of Konkan), and the Lātas of southern Gujarat He celebrated his victories by assuming the title of *Satyāsraya- Prithivallabha- Parameśvara* He is supposed to have received an embassy from K

king of Persia, about 625 A. D One of the paintings in Ajanta is considered to represent this embassy from Persia to the court of Pulakesin Another famous event of Pulakesin's reign was the visit of the famous Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang to Bādāmi He has left vivid impressions of that visit in his interesting diary, both of the prince and of the character of the people and the country seen by him. About Pulakesin, he writes "He is of the race of the Kshatriyas His ideas are large and profound, and he extends widely his sympathies and benefactions His subjects serve him with perfect devotion" Unfortunately, such a splendid monarch fell a victim to his own ambitions and enmities He was constantly at war with the Pallavas of Kānchi He even boasted of having 'caused the splendour of the lord of the Pallavas, who had opposed the rise of his power, to be obscured by the dust of his army, and to vanish behind the walls of Kānchipura.' Mahendravarman was the ruler of the Pallavas then. His son, Narasimhavarman, very soon reversed the tables on the Chālukyas, by invading and destroying their capital of Vātāpi Pulakesin II appears to have died in the course of that struggle

Under Pulakesin's successors, the struggle with the Pallavas was carried on for generations, sometimes the one, and sometimes the other holding the palm of victory Vikramāditya II is said to have conquered practically the whole of the Deccan and South India, down to the shore of the southern sea Yet, his son, Kīrtivarman II, was obliged to surrender to one of his own subordinate feudatories, Dantidurga of the Rāshtrakuta family We will deal with the Rāshtrakutas and the Pallavas when we have finished with the other two branches of the Chālukyas

The Chālukyas of Kalyāni: It was about 754 A. D. that Dantidurga seized the Chālukya dominions in the Deccan. His successors continued in power, as we shall see later, for about two centuries more. Though the early Chālukyas were overthrown after Kīrtivarman II, tradition says that one of his scions, Jayasimha, fled to Gujarat and founded the Solanki dynasty there, in Anhilwāra, of whose fortunes we have spoken before. The power of the Chālukyas in the Deccan was restored by Tailapa. His exploits are narrated in an inscription at Dāvangerė, in Mysore, wherein we are told: 'As the boar of Vishnu [Varāha] recovered the earth which had been submerged in the ocean, so he raised the fortunes of the Chālukya family which had been submerged by the frauds of the Rāshtrakutas.' It was this very Tailapa who took Munja Paramāra captive and executed. He was succeeded by his son, Satyāśraya (in 997 A. D.), who reigned till 1008. In his time and that of his successors, Vikramāditya and Jayasimha, the Ganga and Chālukya dominions were over-run by the rising power of the Cholas under Rājarāja I. Though the Chālukyas continued to produce great rulers like Someśvara I and II, and Vikramāditya VI, we may not follow their careers, because they will take us well into the twelfth century. Yet, it is necessary to note that under Vikramāditya VI (1076-1126 A. D.) the Chālukyas were at the height of their power and prosperity. At his court lived great poets like Bilhaṇa, and scholars like Vijnāneśvara, author of *Mitākharā*, a great work on Hindu law. According to the latter writer: 'There has not been, there is not, and there will never be, on the face of the earth, a city like Kalyāṇi; and never was a monarch like the prosperous Vikramānka ever seen or heard of.'

Of the Eastern Chālukyas of Vengi, suffice it to state that that ruling house was founded by the brother of Pulakeśin II, Kubja Vishnuvardhana, in 615 A D *The Shorter Cambridge History of India* observes: "He reigned from A. D. 615 to 633 and dated his regnal years from his installation as governor All the rulers of the dynasty are known, and the chronology is unusually accurate, but the inscriptions do not yield much precise historical information. . For the thirty years, from A. D. 973 to 1003, the land of Vengi 'was without a leader'. Nothing is known of the dynasty during this period, but the probability is that the country was conquered and occupied by the Cholas" Later members of the Eastern Chālukyas merged into the Chola family by ties of blood

The Rāshtrakutas We cannot speak with certainty about the origin and antiquity of the Rāshtrakutas They have been linked up with the Rāshtrikas or Rathikas of the Asoka inscriptions. In more historical times, they were the successors of the Kshatrapas and Āndrabrityas in the Deccan, and held sway over this part of the country from the third to the sixth century. The territory originally held by them was known as Rattavādi, and they had two capital cities Mayurkhandi (near Nasik) and Mānyakheta (or Malked in the Nizam's Dominion) Their earlier rulers were vassals of the Chālukyas But, as we have stated before, Dantidurga (*c.* 754 A D) captured power from Chālukya Kīrtivarman II, or his immediate successors, and appears to have extended his conquests from Kalinga in the north, to Sri-Saila (Karnool) in the south His successor, Krishna I, immortalized himself by the building—or excavation—of the world-famous Kailās temple of Elura. Krishna I reigned from 753 to 775 A D His son, Dhruva,

was very ambitious, and fought for supremacy with rulers far and near, including the Gangas and Pallavas in the south, and the Gurjaras and Pālas in the north. His son, Govinda III, is described by V. A. Smith as 'the most remarkable prince of this vigorous dynasty' His dominions may be considered to have extended from the Narmada to the Tungabhadra His son, Amoghavarsha I (815-78 A D) is even better known He was a patron of the Kannada language and literature, and the Arab visitor, Sulaiman (851 A D), speaks of 'the long-lived Balhara'—Vallabharāya—as one of the four greatest rulers of the world known to him . the other three being the Caliph of Baghdad, the emperor of China, and the emperor of Roum (Constantinople) He was a great patron of the Digambara Jainas. The *Ratnamālikā* and the *Kavirājamārga*, the earliest known work on poetics in the Kannada language, are attributed to him

Of the successors of Amoghavarsha, we will mention only two Indra III, who captured Kanauj from the Gurjaras in 916 A D and Krishna III who fought against the Chola ruler, Rājāditya, son of Parāntaka I. He claimed to have captured Kānchi and Tanjore He died in 966 A D The political history of the Rāshtrakutas of Malkhed comes to a close with the overthrow of Karka by Tailapa Chālukya in 973 A D, as already mentioned Whatever their contributions to culture and in other respects, they fought against their own countrymen, for the sake of self aggrandizement—though not unlike the rest in this respect—but favoured the Arabs, as Al' Masudi (c 956 A D) has stated

The Pallavas : *The origin of the Pallavas of Kānchi is a debatable question. The hypothesis of their foreign extraction 'can neither be confirmed nor contradicted in the present state of the evidence'* Politically they

shared the dominions of the Sātavāhanas with the Kadambas The earliest of their epigraphs belong to Skandavarman, who is spoken of as of the Pallava family and Bharadvāja *gotra* Their capital was at Kānchi, and they ruled over the land extending up to the Tungabhadra and Krishna rivers We do not know the western boundary of the Pallava kingdom. Skandavarman performed the *Aśvamedha*, and assumed the title of *Dharmamahārājādhurāja*, which illustrates his imperial pretensions The Vishnugopa defeated by Samudragupta in the fourth century A D was a Pallava ruler of Kānchi We have already alluded to the conflicts between the Pallavas and Chālukyas, with claims and counterclaims of victory from both of them It is clear that there were invasions of the territories and destruction of their capital cities more than once The Pallavas held the hinterland between the Chālukyas of the north and the Cholas of the south Mahendravarman and Narasimhavarman have already been mentioned in connection with the Chālukyas Narasimhavarman called himself 'Vātāpikonda' as the conqueror of Vātāpi or Bādami, while Vikramāditya I, his son Vinayāditya and grandson Vijayāditya as well as great grandson Vikramāditya II, carried their victorious arms from Kānchi to Trichinopoly, in the land of the Cholas and Pāndyas. There was a Mahendravarman II, and a Narasimhavarman II, followed by a Nadivarman and a Dantivarman They were at war with the Rāshtrakutas of the north, the Gangas of the west, and the Cholas and Pāndyas in the south Aparājita, about the close of the ninth century, was the last of them He at first won a victory over the Pāndyas at Purambiyam, near Kumbhakonam, but met with a greater reverse at the hands of the Chola king Āditya, son of Vijayālaya, and consequently lost all his gains in Tondamandalam When the main family of

the Pallavas thus disappeared from history, minor families like the Nolamba-Pallavas of N-E. Mysore continued to exist as petty rulers down to the tenth century.

DRAVIDIAN INDIA

We now come to the farthest end of the Indian peninsula Politically, it was shared between the Cholas, the Pāndyas, and the Cheras They were all non-Aryans, and, with the exception of the first, were only of local interest Nevertheless, their history is of great cultural importance. It is to be remembered that their contributions to the making of our history and civilization, here as well as in Greater India, have been large and valuable

The Pallavas whose history we have read, really had their centre of power in the heart of the Chola land—round about Madras—with Kānchi as their capital. The later Cholas of history had their capital in Tanjore. They eventually superseded the Pallavas in the north, and the Pandyas in the south and west. The Cheras occupied the country now known as Malabar or Kerala All these were parts of the ancient Tamilākam or Tamil country Dramila and Dravida are variations of the same name The people of this land were known to some of the writers of the north, both Indian and foreign, in very ancient times But they do not yield us any definite political or dated history, and will therefore be referred to later while dealing with the external contacts of the early South Indians

Our earliest historical information about the Cholas is derived from the Tamil literature of the Sangam period, i e about the opening centuries of the Christian era The most famous of the early Chola kings was Karikāla, whose account is given in the *Pattinappalai*

of Rudran-kannanar In the third century A D they lost the northern portions of their country to the Pallavas of Kāñchi Thereafter the Cholas were totally eclipsed, first by the Pallavas and afterwards by the Pāndyas The Pāndyan kingdom, according to tradition, occupied the entire southern end of the peninsula, from sea to sea, or from Pudukottai in the east to Travancore in the west.

We hear of the existence of the Pāndyas from the writings of the Greek ambassador, Megasthenes, and Asoka's edicts, in the fourth century B C, as well as from the *Mahāvamsa*, a Ceylonese Buddhist chronicle of a century earlier (c 487 B C) In the first century A D, ambassadors from the Pāndya king were received by the Roman emperor Korkai, on the east coast, was at first the capital of the Pāndya rulers, later they shifted to Madura The Pallavas who had eclipsed the Cholas failed to subdue the Pāndyas in their own homelands But, for a time, another set of invaders—probably from the Kannada country—conquered the Pāndyas of Madura and ruled over them These were the Kalbhras or Kallar In the latter half of the seventh century, however, the Pāndyas completely recovered their independence under Nedumāran (c 650-80 A. D) Ranadhīran and Rājasimha (c 740 A D) were the next two rulers to distinguish themselves The former won a victory over the Maratha (Chālukya ?) king at Mangalāpuram (Mangalore), and the latter extended the Pāndya supremacy over the Cholas and the Cheras Their successors had to fight against the Pallavas, the Gangas, the Cholas and the kings of Ceylon, with the result that Pāndya power was overthrown towards the close of the ninth century A D Their last ruler was Rājasimha, whose Sinnamanur plates have helped historians to recover much of the Pāndyan history.

The next to enjoy the hegemony in South India were the Cholas After Āditya s victory over the Pallavas and Pāndyas, the Cholas built up their greatness from Tanjore. The revival began with Āditya s father, Vijayālaya, and continued down to Kulottunga, who reigned from 1070 to 1118 A D Their later history does not concern us here. Parāntaka (907-47) assumed the title of *Maduraikondān*, and built the Golden Hall in Chidambaram In 985 A. D. the great Rājarāja ascended the throne and ruled gloriously until 1015 He was great both as a warrior and as a statesman Without going into the details of his conquests, we may roundly state that he became overlord of the whole of the present Madras Presidency, Travancore, parts of Mysore, and Ceylon The Eastern Chālukyas were loyal to him, and he defeated the Western Chālukya ruler, Satyāśraya, in 973 A D His sway extended over the 'ancient islands of the sea' (Laccadives and Maladives) The magnificent Rājarajesvara temple of Tanjore was built by him Though he was an ardent Saiva himself, Rājarāja did not persecute the followers of other faiths like the Vaishnavas, the Jainas and the Buddhists He devoted the last years of his reign to the organization of his administration His inscriptions are very helpful to historians in the reconstruction of the history of the period He bore, among other titles, the curious one of *Nityavinoda*

Rājendra, the son and successor of Rajarāja, continued the great work of his father, and carried his military and naval exploits farther afield He ruled from 1016 to 1042 A D By his victory over Mahipala, king of Bengal, he earned the name of *Gangaikonda* To celebrate this triumph, he built a new city and called it Gangaikonda-Cholapuram His naval expedition to Kadaram or Srī Vijaya (Sumātrī) is testified to by Chola as well as Chinese records of the eleventh century

Chera history really commenced with Athan I, a contemporary of Karikāla Chola, in the first century A D He was defeated by Karikāla, but his son, Athan II, married a daughter of the conqueror The poet Kapilar, who was a member of the Tamil Sangam, lived at the court of Athan II. His son was Senguttuvan whose exploits are celebrated in the Tamil classic, *Silappa thikāram*, composed by his brother Ilangova digal In the second century A D the Cheras appear to have enjoyed hegemony over the whole of Tamilākam Kulashekhara, one of their kings in the eighth century, has been identified with the *alvar* (saint) of that name, who wrote the devotional work called *Mukundamālā* According to the *Keralotpatti*, a Malayālam work embodying very early traditions Kerala or the land of the Cheras (Malabar) was recovered from the sea by Parashurāma Christians, Jews, and Muhammadans, came to the west-coast, during the regime of the Perumāls, which came to an end during the ninth century Until lately, it was held by some scholars that Cheramān Perumāl, one of the Chera rulers, was converted to Islam, and that he went on a pilgrimage to Mecca Perhaps this was true of one of the Zamorins of Calicut, who succeeded to the power of the Perumāls We have a good account of the introduction of Islam in the south in a work called *Tuhfut-ul-Mulahaddin*, written by a Malabar Muslim, named Shaikh Zain-ud din, under the patronage of Ali Adil Shah of Bijapur

III. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Large groups of people cannot live long together without being politically organized under some sort of Government The character or form of government need not be the same for all people the world over We, therefore, witness different types of government in different countries, and at different times, even among the same people. There is no satisfactory reason why the form of government should remain the same for all time in any country. Changes are necessary, and they do come about, according to the needs and circumstances of the people and times We thus see, in the history of ancient India as well, that *government in its various forms—monarchical, oligarchical*, and democratic—prevailed in different parts of the country, at the same or different times

The earliest evidence we have in India, of an organized community, is in the Indus valley of the Mohenjo-daro period. Though no detailed information of the political organization of that remote period of our history is available, it stands to reason that such a highly advanced urban civilization could not have existed without an advanced and efficient system of public administration We have already remarked that there are no traces of monarchy among the relics of Mohenjo-daro, and, at any rate, the municipal administration of that ancient city might well have been democratic.

In the Vedic Age, we are able to gather, from con-

the joint family into a clan, and a clan, or clans, into a tribe. The head of the family, or patriarch, was its ruler by natural selection or by the choice of all its members. He wielded sovereign authority over them At the tribal stage, the senior patriarch would be the leader in peace as well as war. Such a leader tended to become permanent, and finally hereditary Thus was monarchy evolved. The king was called *Rāja* or *Rājan* When he started on an imperial career of conquest, he performed sacrifices like the *Rājasūya* and *Aśvamedha*, and assumed the title of *Samrāt*.

The king was assisted by a *Purohita*, a *Senāni* and several *Grāmani* In course of time, their number increased, their functions became more and more specialized, and they, together, constituted the *Mantri Parishad*. Originally, each tribe or *Jana* had its *Viś* or settlement, which also constituted the *Grāma* Its head was the *Viśpati*, *Grāmapati* or *Grāmani* The assembly of the entire *Jana* was called the *Sabhā*, out of the *Sabhā*, a *Samiti* of chosen leaders was constituted, either naturally or by formal selection by the people. Even when there was a *Rāja at the top*, he was assisted by the various bodies named above. The spirit of democracy prevailed, though sometimes, in outward form, the organization looked like a monarchy or an oligarchy. A verse in the *Rigveda* declares

> 'Assemble, speak together, let your minds be all of one accord The place is common, common the assembly, common the mind, so be their thoughts united A common purpose do I lay before you One and the same be your resolve, and be your minds of one accord. United be the thoughts of all, that all may happily agree'

Collection of taxes is also indicated by the name of an officer called the *Bhāgadugha* (collector of taxes) and another called the *Samgrahitri* or treasurer. The king

himself is described as *Shadbhāgin* or 'sharer of the sixth part,' which might indicate that the revenue constituted one-sixth of the income of the people.

When the Vedic society developed the more complex civilization described in the epics — *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* — changes in the political system and organization were naturally to be expected. Even at the time when the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* was composed, a number of kings are mentioned as having inaugurated their rule by a *Mahābhisheka*, after which they 'went everywhere, conquering the earth, up to its ends, and sacrificed the horse.' But, despite this spirit of imperialism, either real or conventional, democracy continued into the Epic Age. For instance, in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, we find Daśaratha convening an assembly of his subjects, in order to get the approval of his subjects to the succession of Śrī Rāmachandra. He particularly asked his people to think well in

who constituted the Vajjian Confederacy, farther east, are the best known examples of popularly governed states in ancient times But the easy successes of Alexander, in the Punjab, awakened the country to the danger from foreign invasion, and a strong centralized imperial government was consequently created by the Mauryas, soon after

Administration under the Mauryas With the establishment of the Maurya empire, the country attained both unity and strength It maintained a strong army, drove away the Yavanas, and brought the major part of India under its sovereign authority. We are able to form a definite picture of the times from the writings of the Greek Megasthenes, the inscriptions of Aśoka, which are scattered through the country, and from the *Artha-śāstra* of Kautilya, or Chānakya, the great minister of Chandragupta Maurya

The outstanding features of this empire were that, it extended beyond the present limits of India in the north-west, at least as far as the Hindukush, that it was divided into viceroyalties, in which the trusted relatives of the emperor were appointed as provincial rulers, that under them were subordinate officials called *Rajjukas, Prādesikas* or *Sthānikas* and *Yuktas*; and that there were special boards, or committees, to look after the various departments in the capital cities Over them all was promulgated the *Dhamma* or *Dharma*, supervised and enforced by special officers called the *Dharma-mahāmātras*. There were also official reporters all over the empire, called *Pativedakas*

The administration of Pātaliputra was entrusted to a Board of thirty members, divided into six committees of five members each One of the committees looked after the foreigners who lived in the city; another kept a

record of the births and deaths of citizens; a third supervised the manufacture of articles of trade, a fourth regulated the weights and measures and prices, a fifth interested itself in the industrial arts and crafts, and a sixth collected the taxes

The army of the Mauryas comprised, under Chandragupta '600 000 infantry, 30,000 horsemen, 35,000 men with 9,000 elephants and 24,000 men with nearly 8,000 chariots, or 690,000 men in all, excluding camp-followers or attendants' The military administration, too, was under six committees (i) Admiralty; (ii) Transport and Commissariat, (iii) Cavalry, (iv) Infantry, (v) Chariots and (vi) Elephants

But, with all this military strength, if the edicts of Asoka are to be taken as reliable guides, the Maurya empire at its best must have made the nearest approach to the Indian ideal of a *Dharma rājya* That is why the government of the Indian Union today has adopted the *Chakra* of Aśoka as depicted on the Lion Capital of Sārnāth, as its symbol, to inspire modern India Even the wild tribes, on the frontiers of the empire, were sought to be won over by the Law of Piety, and not by force One of his famous edicts declares 'Everywhere men hearing His Majesty s ordinance based on the Law of Piety, and his instructions based on that Law, practise, and will practise, the Law'

Indeed there never was another king like Asoka The *Artha sāstra* and the Edicts, read together with the observations of Megasthenes, convince us of the truth of what historians have admiringly stated about the greatness and uniqueness of the Maurya achievement It was the first empire built by Indians, about whose historicity we may not have any doubts, and that empire, therefore, was quite a spontaneous expression of the genius of our race While, on the one hand it was centralized, it gave

on the other hand, the largest degree of freedom and justice, consistent with unity, to the outlying provinces According to the *Artha-sāstra* In the happiness of his subjects lies the happiness of the king, in their good is his own good and not in what is pleasing to himself He must find his pleasure in the happiness of his subjects' Aśoka declares in his Rock Edict VI 'My highest duty is indeed the promotion of the good of all Of that, again the root is this exertion and dispatch of business There is no higher work than the promotion of the common weal Megasthenes bears witness to the fact that 'He remained in court the whole day without allowing the business to be interrupted even when the hour arrived for the needs of his own person to be attended to The palace was open to all persons, even when the king was having his hair dressed it was then that he gave audience to ambassadors, and administered justice to his subjects by listening to their plaints'

In this introductory book we cannot find space for all the interesting things found in either the *Artha-sāstra* or the Edicts A modern historian has summarily stated 'Popular interest in the royal teaching was further secured by the provision at government expense, of material comforts for man and beast The highroads were marked with milestones, and shaded by avenues of trees Camping grounds were furnished with wells, mango groves, and rest-houses for travellers Hospitals were founded and medical herbs, wherever they were lacking, were freely imported and planted The severity of the penal code was mitigated and on each anniversary of the coronation, prisoners were liberated In these ways and by a watchful supervision over public morals, Asoka demonstrated the sincerity of his faith and secured an astonishing degree of success in his efforts to propagate the system of the Buddha But he did not force his creed upon

his "children" as he called his subjects He fully recognized the right of all sects and creeds to live and let live and did not hesitate to adopt a policy of concurrent endowment In respect of this active toleration, his conduct was in accordance with that of most monarchs of ancient India By his efforts, Buddhism which had hitherto been a merely local sect, in the valley of the Ganges, was transformed into one of the greatest religions of the world This is Asoka's claim to be remembered this it is which makes his reign an epoch, not only in the history of India, but in that of the world

Post-Maurya Administration It is the fate of all human institutions that, when they have served the purpose for which they are created, they no longer survive Governments are made by men in order to serve their living purposes Just as the institutions of the Mohenjodaro and Vedic ages disappeared, or were modified to suit the needs of later times, when the Maurya empire vanished, and India was again overrun by fresh invaders like the Yavanas, Sakas and Kushānas, as we have witnessed in the preceding section, changes were called for, and made, in the administrative organization of the country

The first result of the foreign invasions was that the country came to be split up into several small and independent states In the confusion thus caused, each tried to establish a government which best suited its own local traditions and needs Owing to this diversity, it is no longer easy to describe the political organization of India according to any unified system But we can piece together and co-ordinate information, culled from the numerous inscriptions scattered throughout the country, and formulate an intelligible account of the administration during the period preceding the advent of the great Gupta

emperors Here it is well to remember that history is a continuous process in which new orders emerge out of the old, and every succeeding generation is the inheritor of accumulated legacies We therefore find, that, in the period under review, something of the old, as described in the *Artha-śāstra* and *Smritis*, is mixed with something newly invented, as well as, a few things borrowed from the foreigners who were flooding certain parts of the country at that time The term 'Kshatrapa', as a designation of the provincial governor, is of foreign origin We find it used even today in another form Satrap It gained currency during the rule of the Persians, the Yavanas, Sakas and Kushānas

When the old unity of the Maurya empire was lost and people were faced with unexpected and difficult situations, they went back to old traditions, and seriously studied the ancient literature on the subject of defence and administration, and adapted the old ideas to their own requirements Thus, there was a partial revival of the old, and a partial creation of new offices and institutions Under these circumstances, we find that some of the non monarchical states revived their old constitutions, and others preferred the monarchical form, as it was considered more helpful in the confused state of the country. The chief ones among the non monarchical states were the Madras in Central Punjab, the Kunindas in the Kāngra valley, the Yaudheyas in S-E Punjab, the Arjunāyas in the Agra-Jaipur area, the Malavas in Central Rajputana, and the Prārjunas, Sanakānikas, Kākas and Abhiras, farther south In South India, even when the main form of government was monarchical, self-governing institutions flourished—as we shall see later in the social and economic spheres The Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta refers to kings, as well as

groups of people who, obviouly, organized themselves, into states without a king at their head

The monarchical form was preferred by some, as we have said before, either because of local tradition or local circumstances Sometimes, leadership passed into the hands of certain aristocratic families, and an oligarchy was established Others submitted to a temporary dictator who made his office hereditary At first, such a practice was subject to the choice or confirmation by the representatives of the people—their elders and ministers—but the institution of hereditary monarchy, once created, tended to grow along its own lines For a long time, at any rate, the ancient ideals of the Indian monarchy continued to be cherished, at least in theory. The inscriptions bear testimony to the noble conceptions of kingship held by some of the rulers of this period

The status of the king was indicated by the title borne by him From being a *Rāja*, he would rise to be a *Mahārāja* and then *Mahārājādhirāja* Some were designated *Samrāt* and *Prithvi-vallabha* Their imperial ambitions were marked by the performance of the traditional *Asvamedha* Titles like *Satyāsraya* indicated their idealism as the 'anchor of truth'. *Vikramaditya*, or the 'sun of prowess', denoted their martial qualities or ambitions The statesmanlike behaviour of Samudragupta, in his classification of the various conquered states (into friendly neighbours, diplomatic allies, autonomous feudatories or vassals, and subordinates to the sovereign authority of the conqueror) is an example of the nature of Indian imperialim at its best The art, industry, literature, and culture in general, which flourished under the patronage of the ancient rulers of India will be illustrated in a later

Generally, they deserved to be called *L*
protectors and guardians of their subjects

In formal organization, new terms came to be introduced in addition to, if not in supersession of the old ones For instance, the provinces, or parts of the empire, were designated *Bhukti*, *Deśa*, *Mandala*, or even *Rāshtra* The officer in charge of a division, or unit, was often called *Uparika* The district official was called *Viśaya-pati*, and was assisted by subordinates, like the *Nagara-pati*, *Grāmādhyaksha*, and so on In the south, a group of villages formed a *Kurram*, *Kottam*, *Nādu* or *Mandala*. How the Panchāyats, Guilds, and other local corporations were organized and worked, will be described later. For purposes of defence there were *Senāpatis* and *Mahā-Senāpatis*, who were also called *Danda nāyakas* or simply *Dannāyakas* in the south.

Gupta Administration. The Guptas were the inheritors and custodians of the best traditions of ancient India We owe it them, also, that those traditions were crystallized and preserved for the benefit of later generations By their time, Indian monarchy had come to be invested with an almost divine halo, but it was a divinity that was hedged in with certain well-understood limitations As Professor A S Altekar has pointed out "Both the *Smritis* and the inscriptions of our age empasise that a king can become a successful ruler, only if he waits upon the elders, studies the art of government, cultivates religiousness and protects his subjects as efficiently as the divine guardian He must make assiduous efforts to master political science, to cultivate fortitude and to acquire leadership, otherwise he would fail in his task. Kings who were haughty, irreligious, immodest and tyrannical, were never regarded as divine, nor was their right to oppress their subjects ever conceded, they are held to public opprobrium in the epigraphs of our period"

Most of the princes received good training and served an apprenticeship before they ascended the throne Both Samudragupta and Chandragupta II were specifically nominated by their predecessors, in preference to their elder brothers on account of their personal merits Harshavardhana, too, in later times, was chosen by the *Mantri Parishad*, and approved of by the subjects, before he became king About 200 A D , among the Kshatrapas, it was the custom for the younger brothers to become kings in succession, when the elder died , and, if the line was completed with the last of them, then they would begin again with the eldest son of the eldest brother who was king before But that was a very peculiar practice not followed in the rest of the country. Elsewhere, however, the Rājakumāras, or junior princes, were appointed to places of responsibility in the provinces, both in the civil and military offices.

Though, theoretically, the king was the head of all departments of the state, in actual practice, he was assisted by a body of *mantrins* or *sachivas*, and a military commander called the *Mahābalādhikrita* The private secretaries of the king were known as *Rahasi-niyuktas*. The ecclesiastical department was under *Vinaya-sthiti-sthāpakas*, who looked after the promotion of Dharma, temples charities, and learning Officers of this department in the villages were called *Agrahārikas*. There were also other officers named *Drangikas* who looked after the roads, rest-houses, and the collection of octroi. The minister in charge of foreign relations was known as *Sandhivigrahika* or *Mahāsandhivigrahika* There was an over all superintendent of all departments, called *Sarvā-*

borne only by officers of the provincial cadre for *Harisena*, the famous minister of Samudragupta, who composed the Allahabad inscription, was also a *Kumārāmātya* But it is evident that the *Mahābalādhikrita* or *Mahādandanāyaka* was of a higher status than a *Kumārāmātya* There are cases of the latter being promoted to fill the higher office We have already spoken of the *Uparikas*, who were in charge of provincial administrations They seem to have been directly responsible to the king and had under them various local officials like *Visaya-patis*, *Dhruvas*, *Adhikritas*, etc These were revenue officers The police chief was called the *Dandapāsika* or *Choroddharanika* who had under him *chatas* and *bhatas* or ordinary police subordinates

The administration of justice was directly under the king at the capital We do not know about the organization of this important department as a hierarchy all over the kingdom Most of the cases were decided in the local *Panchāyats* Important cases of appeal must have been referred to the king s court The village headman was an important man but he was chosen by, and responsible to, the people of the village He was called the *Grāmādhyaksha* He was assisted by the *Mahattaras*, or village elders The *Mahattaras* are referred to in the records of the Pallavas and the Vakatakas, while in Central India they were called *Pancha mandali* and *Grāma janapada* in Bihar The head of a town administration was known as *Nagarādhyaksha* or *Purapala* He enjoyed under the Guptas, the status of a *Kumārāmatya* His councillors were called *Vishaya mahattaras*

The Administration of Harshavardhana The reign of Harshavardhana of Kanauj is of considerable importance and interest in the history of ancient India for a variety of reasons He was a contemp[illegible] M-

hammad, the Prophet of Islam, whose followers flooded India during the period which saw the disruption of the country, as a result of the disappearance of a strong ruler like him Thereafter, India began to change so fast and almost completely, on account of foreign domination, that one may regard Harsha as really the last great monarch of the ancient Hindu period of our history In his time, we find practically all the best trends of our ancient traditions and civilization, gathered together in a brief but glorious epoch Fortunately for us, our materials for a reconstruction of the history of that epoch are ampler and more reliable than of almost any other we have so far come across We have coins, inscriptions, contemporary writings, as well as the recorded impressions of a very competent foreign visitor to the court of Harsha, viz the Chinese Hiuen Tsang The *Harsha charita* of Bāna who lived under the patronage of Harsha gives us very vivid portraits of the monarch and his times The coins of Harsha bear his profile, from which we can recognize his personality, and he is also the only monarch of ancient India whose signature has come down to us in an inscription Harsha did a lot of travelling all through his empire, in order to supervise its administration, and left his impress upon it so long as he was alive He had the toleration of Asoka, the martial vigour of Samudragupta, as well as, the grandeur and accomplishments of Vikramāditya The following extract from Hiuen Tsang's account will speak for itself

> 'As the administration of the government is founded on benign principles the executive is simple The families are not entered on registers and the people are not subjected to forced labour The crown lands are divided into four parts The first is for the carrying out the affairs of state, the second for paying the ministers and officers of the crown, the third, for rewarding men of genius, the fourth for giving alms to religious

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communities In this way the taxes on the people are light and the services required of them are moderate Everyone keeps his worldly goods in peace and all till the soil for their subsistence Those who cultivate the royal estates pay a sixth part of their produce as tribute The merchants who engage in commerce travel to and fro in pursuit of their calling Rivers and toll bars are opened for travellers on payment of a small sum When the public works require it labour is exacted, but paid for The payment is in strict proportion to the work done'

It is to be recollected that Harsha came to the throne by the free choice of his ministers and subjects His rule fully justified the confidence placed in him by them 'The king,' says the Chinese pilgrim, 'divided the day into three parts, of which one was devoted to affairs of government, and the remaining two were spent in religious works He was indefatigable, and the day was too short for him He forgot sleep and food in his devotion to good works' The mechanism of government was as we have described it in earlier periods, but, in spite of the idyllic picture drawn by Hiuen Tsang, security to person and property appears to have been less than what it had been in the best days of the Guptas At any rate, that is the inference drawn by most historians from a comparison of the accounts of Fa-hien and Hiuen Tsang "Fa hien's incidental observations taken as a whole," writes V A. Smith, 'indicate that the Gupta empire, at the beginning of the fifth century, was well governed The government let the people live their own lives without needless interference, was temperate in the repression of crime, and tolerant in matters of religion The foreign pilgrim was able to pursue his studies in peace, wherever he chose to reside, and could travel all over India without molestation He makes no mention of any adventures with robbers—' such as, we might add, Hiuen Tsang encountered later Yet, we must not fail to note that the latter pilgrim also remarked 'With respect to crimi-

nals and rebels, *these are few in number*, and *only occasionally troublesome* When the laws are broken, or the power of the ruler violated, then the matter is clearly sifted and the offenders punished There is no infliction of corporal [capital?] punishment, they are simply left to live or die, and are not counted among men When the rules of morality or justice have been violated, or a man is dishonest, or wanting in filial love, his nose or ears are cut off, and he is expelled from the city to wander in the jungle until he dies For other faults besides these a small fine is exacted in lieu of punishment In investigating crimes, the rod is not used to extort proofs of guilt. In questioning the accused, if he answers frankly, his punishment is proportioned accordingly, but if he obstinately denies his fault, in order to probe the truth to the bottom, trial by ordeal is resorted to'

The liberality of Harsha's administration is illustrated by his unique practice of distributing the surplus revenue, accumulated every five years, among his people This was significantly called by him *Moksha* or salvation This was done at a fixed place always, and that place was Prayāga It was described as the 'Area of Charities.' Invitation was issued 'throughout the Five Indies, to the Sramanas heretics, Nirgranthas, the poor, the orphans, and the solitary, to come to the Area of Charities and receive the royal gifts

Lastly, we may note that Harsha also fostered Local Self-government by encouraging non-official elements to participate in the administration of local affairs The people's government was organized under a *Viśayapati*, helped by the *Nagarasresthin* (elders of the city), the *Sārthavāha* (representatives of the trade-guilds), the *Prathamakulika* (representatives of the craft-guilds), and the *Prathama-kāyastha* (head of the Kāyastha scribes).

This information is contained in the Damodarpur inscription of Harshavardhana

THE DEMOCRATIC TRADITION

We have been long accustomed to believe that Democracy was unknown in India until it was introduced lately by the British This is a very misleading impression, and historically it is without a foundation in fact Democracy, in this country, disappeared with the advent of the foreigners Monarchy became deeply rooted during periods of continued anarchy Foreign domination confirmed the anti-democratic trends as the surest means to its perpetuation A few illustrations will serve to show how ancient is the democratic tradition of India

We have noticed already the liberal character of the government of Harshavardhana. We have also observed that the greatness and importance of Harshavardhana lay in his summing up the ancient and best traditions of the land in himself From Asoka to Harshavardhana our monarchs never spared any pains to live up to the ideals inculcated by the *Dharma-śāstras* and works on statecraft like the *Artha-sāstra* and *Sukranīti*. In the latter work we are told that 'the ruler has been made by Brahma a servant of the people, getting his revenue as remuneration' He was expected to consult the desire of his ministers and subjects, and shape his conduct by ascertaining their will 'The king should take the side of his subjects and not of his officers, and he should dismiss the officer who is accused by 100 men' 'The wise ruler should ever abide by the well thought-out decisions of councillors, office-bearers, subjects, and members attending the assembly—never by his own will'

We have stated before that non-monarchical states existed in India from the earliest times Since the days

of the Cholas, we find ample evidence in the inscriptions of the working of democratic local bodies in South India. Such corporations existed in other parts of India also, particularly in the Buddhist age. Professor A S Altekar has discussed the nature and character of similar institutions, with local variations, in Western India, in his book entitled *A History of Village Communities in Western India* We will cite a few illustrations from the south where we obtain the fullest evidence from the inscriptions

The extensive empire of the Cholas was divided into six *Mandalas* or provinces Each of these was sub-divided into a number of *Kottams* or *Valanādus* These in their turn were further divided into *Kurrams* The *Mandalam* was under a governor appointed by the king, but he worked in co operation with the local representative bodies As Professor R C Majumdar has pointed out 'The village corporation practically exercised all the powers of a state within its narrow sphere of activity, and was looked upon as an integral part of the Constitution' The king merely supervised their working, or granted them charters, and generally patronized them Important matters or major disputes, were sometimes referred to the king for adjudication

There were small village-assemblies called the *Urar*, and larger assemblies of the *Nadus*, called the *Nāttar* They were also called respectively, the *Sabhā* and the *Mahāsabhā* There were *Brahmana-sabhās* in the villages occupied by Brāhmanas and devoted to religious purposes and learning these villages were known as *Agrahāras* Two inscriptions in Uttaramerur, have yielded very valuable information about the organization and functions of these village republics The *Sabha* was both a deliberative and executive body Its members were duly elected according to rules elaborately laid down, as to proce-

dure and qualifications of members The franchise was restricted to those holding about two acres of tax-paying land or being from 35 to 70 years of age In special cases, not satisfying these conditions, the candidate was expected to be proficient in at least one of the *Mantra-Brāhmanas* and its *bhāshyas*. Those who were guilty of any moral lapses (*pancha mahāpātakas*) were disqualified, so also were those once elected considered ineligible for at least three years All offices were generally of one year's tenure. There were several Committees to look after the various affairs of the village, like public-works (buildings and repairs), supervision of roads, tanks and temples, measurement of fields and collection of taxes, administration of justice, assessment of gold, etc. There are instances of women serving on some of the Committees. There were also officers appointed by the *Sabhā* to audit the accounts of the temples and the village as a whole. Those who were guilty of embezzlement were disfranchised along with their near relatives

IV. CULTURAL HISTORY

Cultural history is the real history of a people. Political history is only one aspect of it. Books of history mostly contain accounts of kings and governments, not because there is nothing else of value to write about, but because it is easier to get information about kings and their doings than about the life of the common people. Kings, at all times, have taken care to leave records of their achievements, because of their desire to be remembered by future generations, that they might be glorified. Not so the 'simple annals of the poor.' We have to laboriously piece together bits of information, obtained from all the sources that we have mentioned before: viz. archaeological, literary, and others which we will come across in this section. Political life, no doubt, is an important pivot on which to hang the rest of our story; but it is not to be forgotten that history is more comprehensive than a mere narrative of political events, such as those described in the foregoing pages. Nevertheless, it is also to be remembered that, without a firm political framework, general history becomes loose and incoherent. We are better able to trace the steady evolution, or decline, of social, religious, economic, artistic and intellectual life, only against the background of the known political history of the people.

By cultural history we mean here the all-sided life, activities and achievements of Indians, from the earliest times to about the close of the tenth century A. D. We have chosen this limit, because, thereafter, India begins to take a new shape and character, owing to the powerful influence of Islamic civilization which does not come within the scope of our present study. Starting with the Indian civilization of about 3,000 B.C., and closing

with the advent of Islam about 1,000 A D, it makes a long story of approximately four thousand years Since we have already chronologically traced, as far as it was possible, the political developments in this country, during these four millennia, we will now look at the picture as a whole, and describe the various aspects of our ancient, rich, and enduring civilization through those long ages One distinction, however, must be borne in mind here In our political narrative, we witnessed the country often divided into various small kingdoms, or republican states, unity being, time and again, achieved only under the dynastic rule of distinguished royal families (like the Mauryas, the Guptas, the Vardhanas, the Chālukyas, and the Cholas), but Cultural history, or the history of Indian civilization, is better studied as a whole, assuming the unity of the country in each successive period This will not be unhistorical, because, whatever political and dynastic changes might have taken place in the different parts of the country, ancient India possessed a unity of culture which was evolved and sustained in spite of all other vicissitudes of fortune Even though there were (and are still) local variations, between the North and the South primarily, and the different provinces to a lesser extent, our culture has a fundamental unity which cannot be denied It will be convenient, however, to view it analytically under the following four heads : (i) Social, (ii) Economic, (iii) Artistic, and (iv) Intellectual. The importance, scope and implications of each of these will become clear as we proceed. Together they will constitute a full-blooded picture of ancient India, from 3,000 B C to 1,000 A D

Social Developments Indian society today is the product of a long process of evolution, having its roots in the earliest times of our history In the Introduction

we made a distinction between History, Proto-history, and Pre-history We divided the last of these into the Palaeolithic, Neolithic, and Chalcolithic Ages, followed by an Age of Metals Some may be still lingering at various stages of primitive life, but most of us have been, long since, thoroughly civilized The earliest civilized society we have come across was formed by the people of the Indus valley, at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa We know that they were a scientifically organized urban community, with an advanced standard of living, as shown by the style of houses they lived in, and their drainage system, but we do not know whether, socially, they were homogeneous, or divided, into classes or castes Most of the houses had an upper and a lower storey It is presumed that, since the city was frequently exposed to devastating floods, the well-to-do upper class people occupied the safer and healthier upper flats, while the servants lived in the ground floor rooms The existence of ornaments made of all substances, from clay to silver, gold, and precious stones, confirms the obvious conclusion that society was divided, even in those remote times into the rich and the poor A number of what seem to be religious symbols, like seals and images, have been discovered among the relics, yet, we know very little about the religious life of the Indus people Religion plays a very important part in our national life today, and we are divided into innumerable sects like the Saiva, Vaishnava, Jaina, Buddhist, etc At Mohenjo-daro, too, some have identified objects like the *linga* a figure of *Pasupati*, and another of the Mother Goddess Nevertheless, there is nothing to indicate that the people of Mohenjo-daro were split up into sectarian groups At any rate, their civic life appears to have been quite harmonious Apart from having public baths, where people may have gathered, either for ritualistic or merely social

purposes, they had a variety of games and other diversions While little children amused themselves with toys and marbles, their elders – both men and women – found entertainment in board-games, dancing, music, etc. evidences of which are seen in the relics The dice with which they played had marks one opposite to two, three opposite four, and five opposite six, while on our modern dice the sum of the opposite marks is always seven Dice made of ivory and at least one dancing figurine have also been discovered, while the seals contain figures of musical instruments—like the tambourine, harp and lyre—engraved on them As regards disposal of the dead they appear to have observed all the three forms of burial, partial-burial, and cremation Urns of hardware or stone, containing the last relics of some of the dead, have been found in fairly large numbers

Vedic Society After the Indus period of our history, we should, chronologically speaking, say something about the social organization of the Dravidians But we know really very little about them before they got mixed with the Aryans Dravidian sources of information are of a later date, when they were already long under the influence of the Aryans However, one thing is certain, namely, that the Dravidians were not so uncivilized as their Aryan conquerors tried to make out in the beginning They were, at first, looked down upon as the *Dāsas* or *Dasyus* dark complexioned and 'fireless', eating uncooked food, and worshipping the low and creeping gods of the earth, whereas, the Aryans regarded themselves as superior, noble, eating cooked food, and worshipping the bright gods of heaven—like Indra, Varuna, Sūrya and Agni. The language of the Dravidians was considered to be savage gibberish, while that of the Aryans was *girvāna* or divine *Samskrit* i e 'refined'. But, despite

the implications of such a contrast, it is now admitted that the Dravidians had a fairly developed civilization, lived in fortified cities, and made considerable progress in music, literature and the arts Their society was also professionally organized into various classes like agriculturists, hunters, fishermen, etc Apart from the spirits, serpents, trees and rivers, they also worshipped a god called Murugan, and the Mother Goddess in various forms Descent among them was reckoned as matrilineal, while the Aryans were patrilineal But, in course of time, the two peoples mixed together and, borrowing each other's ideas, cults, customs and manners, formed the Hindu society of later times Those who were originally Dravidian by race, now became Aryan in culture, just as, subsequently, other foreigners (like the Yavanas, Pahlavas, Sakas Kushānas and Hūnas) were also to be Hinduized beyond recognition For all practical purposes, therefore, we will speak of a single 'Aryan Culture,' without attempting to separate the Dravidian and other non-Aryan elements in it But, when we come to describe Literature and Art, we shall be able to distinguish these several elements more clearly than it is possible in the fields of Religion and Society

Aryan or Hindu society has certain fundamental features which have remained unchanged in the course of ages Some of them have been derived from the Vedic traditions, while others have come in from other and later sources The transformation from the Vedic into the Hindu society came about so imperceptibly that, at this distance, it is as difficult to distinguish between the original and the borrowed elements, as it is between the Aryan and the Dravidian already mentioned The most outstanding characteristic in all this is, perhaps, the fact that at all times the *Vedas* have been regarded as *apaurusheya* or 'revealed,' and consequently not

challenged as ultimate authority in all fundamental matters relating to the Hindus But modern criticism treats the *Vedas* as merely historical literature which when carefully scrutinized yields us much valuable information about the Indo-Aryans, both in the religious and secular aspects of their civilization Our present account is based on the results of such a treatment of the Vedic literature

Aryan society, to begin with, was one and undifferentiated But the contacts with the Dravidians introduced *Varna* or colour as the first mark of obvious distinction Very soon, however, that acquired a technical meaning, and became a label of social differentiation Hence, it came to be applied to the well known divisions of Aryan society *Brāhmanas*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Sūdras* Though these were spoken of as *Chaturvarna* or four *Varnas*, the tendency persisted and resulted in the ultimate creation of innumerable divisions, based neither upon colour, nor upon occupation, but upon birth and the observance of food and marriage restrictions At first, these divisions were neither rigid nor exclusive 'I am a poet' declared the compo er of a Vedic hymn, 'my father is a doctor, and my mother grinds corn With our different views, seeking after gain, we pursue our avocations' It was permissible for people to change their *Varna* may be after some ritualistic purification as was done in the case of the *Vrātyas*, or by deliberate change of occupation, as Viśvāmitra and Parashurāma appear to have done In the story of Satyakāma Jābāla, a truthful boy of nondescript parentage is admitted by a Brāhmana sage, as his disciple, because truthfulness in speech and action was regarded as the real test of a Brāhmana, and not mere birth

The place assigned to women in society is another indicator of the cultural level of a people Though this

has not been the same in all times throughout our history, it is stated by R. C Dutt, without exaggeration, that "Impartial students of ancient history will admit that women held a more honoured place among the ancient Hindus than among the ancient Greeks and Romans" They enjoyed perfect equality of freedom and status with men, in the earliest times Among the composers of some of the Vedic hymns were women-seers like Visavarā, Ghoshā and Apālā, though in later times women were classed with the Sūdras, and forbidden to even read the *Vedas*! There were learned scholars among them, like Gārgi and Maitreyī, who could discuss the highest philosophy with sages like Yājnavalkya In the performance of sacrifices their presence, alongside of their husbands, was considered necessary The grown-up maiden was allowed to make free choice of her spouse at a *svayamvara* There was neither *sati*, nor seclusion of women, widows were permitted to have recourse to *niyoga* even apart from remarriage The ancient Indian ideal of fidelity to one's husband is best illustrated in the noble story of Sāvitrī and Satyavān

Education is an important aspect of social life in all times This was fully recognized in ancient India as well. Its basic principles were laid down in the Vedic literature and elaborated or adapted to the needs of changing times, later In combination with the *Varna* divisions, the *Asrama* system was calculated to impart orderliness to social progress A man was expected to live for a full term of a hundred years These were divided into four approximately equal periods of twentyfive years In the first, he would be a *Brahmachārin*, or probationer when, after *Upanayana*, he would live as a *sishya* with some *guru*, undergoing the most rigorous discipline, ing the various arts and sciences useful to his function in society, and above all mastering

living The curricula and subjects taught and other aspects of ancient Indian education, will be considered in a later section

In the second stage of life, the trained probationer entered *Grihasthāsrama*, or the householder's life, which was considered of utmost importance to society He was its main prop, because its very continuation depended upon him Secondly, he was expected to serve as a link between all the rest Hospitality was the most important part of his duties in addition to his primary function of rearing a healthy and useful progeny After having discharged these vital functions during the prime of his manhood, he was not expected to linger on in a life of selfish indulgence but proceed to the last two stages of *Vānaprastha* and *Sannyāsa*, i e retirement and renunciation All these regulations were based on the fourfold conception of life's objectives expressed in the phrase *Chaturvidha-Purushārtha Dharma, Artha Kāma* and *Moksha* A balanced life would be that in which all the four objectives or aims were sought after and attained Particularly was this inculcated upon the Brāhmana, for whom it was easier to follow than for the others Along with the Brāhmana, the Kshatriya and Vaishya also belonged to the class called the *Dvijas* literally, 'twice-born' (physically and spiritually). The *Dvijas* could fulfil their *Dharma* best by following this scheme of achieving *Purushārtha* or the *summum bonum* of human life—through the observance of all the duties pertaining to one's *varna* and *āśrama* for the time being The duty of the Brāhmana was to learn and teach, that of the Kshatriya was to fight and rule, and of the Vaishya, to produce and distribute wealth The *Sūdra* was to serve all the other three classes A beautiful passage in the *Vedas*, known as the *Purusha-sūkta*, states that the four divisions of society were like the limbs of the body of

Brahma 'The Brahmana was his mouth, the Rājanya was his arms, the Vaishya his thighs, and the Sūdra his feet' Though, in later ages this was made use of to assert the superiority of the Brāhmanas, originally, it was no more than a figure of speech, emphasizing the functional co-ordination in Aryan society It was a society based on co-operation, not competition

We cannot describe all the activities of the Aryan society within a few pages, though that society was quite simple to begin with We will point out here two more of its interesting features before we pass on to its later developments It was quite a human society with all its grave and gay aspects While, on the one hand, the Aryan *rishis*, in all seriousness, addressed hymns to the gods of heaven air, and earth, and performed *havana* or *homa* (simple sacrifices) to propitiate them, the *Rājanya* fought and ruled, and the *Vaishya* carried on tillage and trade, some of them also on the other hand, indulged in drinking *soma* or *surā* (according to their means or status) and played with dice and came to grief A hymn in the *Rigveda* (x 34) records the repentance of a gambler in these words

For dice that only luckless throws effected,
I have driven away from home a wife devoted
Her mother hates me she herself rejects me.
For one in such distress there is no pity
I find a gambling man is no more useful
Than is an aged horse that is in the market

Play not with dice but-cultivate thy tillage,
Enjoy thy riches deeming them abundant
There are thy cows there is thy wife O Gambler
This counsel Savitar the noble gives me'

Later Hindu Society It was from such simple beginnings that the more complex Hindu society of later

times emerged, as a result of the various historical happenings described in the earlier section What was natural and satisfactory to a fresh and compact group of Aryan settlers, in the Land of the Five Rivers, was no longer so to the inhabitants of greater Āryāvarta Settlements grew into kingdoms, and kingdoms developed into empires. Wealth, too, increased in due proportions. In course of time, other foreigners also came, conquered, and mixed with the natives of India The result was a richer civilization created by a more complex society. The *rājan* became a *samrāt* or *chakravartin*, the Vaishya, too, produced more wealth and traded with distant countries The Sūdra was no longer a mere errand-boy or unskilled labourer, but had developed into a clever craftsman who produced articles of utility as well as luxury. In keeping with these changes, the Brāhmana also evolved more elaborate and complicated ceremonials, to meet the religious requirements of this richer, growing, and more complex society. The economic, artistic, and intellectual aspects of these developments will be considered in due course, later. Here we will review and illustrate what happened to social life as such.

As is to be expected, our sources of information relating to these later times are more abundant than what they were in the Vedic age It is well to remember, at the outset, that these later sources are spread over several centuries, and represent what was happening very gradually and imperceptibly. Sometimes, however, a sudden external eruption, like that of the Sakas or Hūnas, might take place, and cause a great disturbance to the existing order, or, an internal upheaval might be brought about by great reformers, like the Buddha and Mahāvira, transforming society considerably by deliberate efforts. We have abundant evidence of what happened under both these sets of circumstances From that, we are able to

reconstruct pictures of the passing ages and the transformations of a developing society. In addition to the epigraphic, numismatic, and other archaeological evidence, we have a vast literature—Vedic, Buddhist, Jaina, Classical, and Prākrit—from which to draw our materials

The emergence of the later Hindu society was a complex and continuous living process It cannot be artificially cut up into exclusive compartments, either chronological or denominational, without creating thereby a wrong impression The Vedic, Buddhist, Jaina, Brahmanical and other strands, have all been woven into the texture of our social, mental, and moral make up—co-operatively producing the Hindu civilization we are now trying to depict. This does not, however, preclude the variation of emphasis on any predominant characteristics, during certain epochs, derived from particular forces which were most active for the time being From this point of view, we may speak of the Pre-Buddhist and Post-Buddhist phases in the evolution of Hindu culture. These phrases do not indicate hard-and-fast divisions For instance, the mission of Gautama Buddha and Mahāvira was not to establish new religions, but only to remove certain evils which had crept into the ancient Aryan society, and to make it better in the interests of all rather than only a few During the post-Vedic or pre-Buddhist period, *Brahmanism* had grown into an oppresive system It was characterized by a complicated ritual, emphasis on sacrifices involving great expenditure of wealth and cruelty to animals, esotericism (cult of the special few) and obscurantism (opposition to reason and reform) Sanskrit was then a highly developed language, no longer spoken by the masses, who only understood Prākrits like Pālī *and Ardhamāgadhī Brāhmanas alone could, therefore,* use, explain, and interprete what was contained in the sacred books, which were all in Sanskrit. Being experts,

they exploited the situation for their own benefit A revolt against their selfish practices was naturally the consequence

Conflict, Reform and Revival These three words correctly sum up the characteristics of the process we are now describing The conflict was between the Brāhmanas and the Kshatriyas, in the earlier stages, on account of the social conditions described above The Brāhmanas had obviously failed in their leadership, and the Kshatriyas were rapidly taking their place In the Vedic age, the supremacy of the Brāhmanas arose from their being experts in ritualistic matters The life of an individual under their teachings, was punctuated by numerous and frequent ceremonials from the prenatal stage to the *antya samskāra* The *Brāhmanas*, and the *Grihya* and *Śrauta-Sutras*, laid down elaborate rules for the observance of the several ceremonials When the princes performed the *Rājasuya* and *Aśvamedha* sacrifices, involving very heavy expenditure as well as the slaughter of animals on a large scale, there was a natural revulsion of feeling That this should have been the case with kings or Kshatriyas accustomed to war, bloodshed and extravagance, may at first appear rather strange But a little reflection will show that, while in war the Kshatriya was the gainer, the profits of sacrifices were all appropriated by the priests Again, the deliberate slaughter of innocent animals, with the long drawn agonies of an elaborate ritual, involved more ruthlessness and callousness than either the battle-field or the chase with its frenzied excitements Besides, intellectually, the Kshatriyas were not inferior to the Brāhmanas, as is borne out by the *Āranyakas* and *Upanishads* The example of Janaka, king of Videha, is a good illustration of this Even intellectualism carried to extremes was

bound to start reactions. It was necessary to re-emphasize morality, on account of the excesses committed in ritualism and metaphysics The Buddha and Mahāvīra were leaders of this revolt against the old order, as apostles of Reform They were both members of the ruling class, both inculcated *ahimsā* as the highest duty, and both equally laid stress on ethical conduct as distinguished from the formal practices of religion. They brought enlightenment to the masses by preaching to them in the vernaculars, ignored caste-distinctions, propagated their new faith by organizing the *Samgha* for spiritual as well as secular purposes Though, theoretically, they condemned woman as a temptation in the path of spiritual progress, they admitted her into their ascetic system as a nun, in practice. The extreme asceticism of Mahāvīra was corrected by the Buddha's 'Middle Path,' or the Golden Mean Thus was society in the Buddhist Age made more homogeneous and purified in its idealism and conduct. While the Jaina *Āgama* or *Siddhāntas*, and the Buddhist *Tripitaka* and *Suttas* acquaint us with the theoretical aspects of their respective creeds, the Buddhist *Jātakas* afford us vivid glimpses of their social effects In the unique organization of the State under Aśoka, we have the political application of the principles and philosophy of Buddhism. It was sought to be continued by the Greek Menander and the Kushāna Kanishka, in the succeeding centuries, but the forces of Revivalism soon brought about a fresh transformation of Indian society.

character *Mahāyāna* marked an important phase in the transition Like the old Brahmanism, Buddhism too, it was felt, had gone to extremes, and *Mahāyāna* was intended to be a corrective The Buddhists concentrated on *Nirvāna* which was construed as salvation for the isolated individual This was too selfish, abstract and unsocial Hence, new teachers, like Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu and Aśvaghosha, arose and preached a more social or popular form of Buddhism It was called *Mahāyāna* or the Great Vehicle, in contrast to the *Hinayānā*, or Little Vehicle, as the older form of Buddhism was now styled We are concerned here with the social rather than the philosophical implications of this change Original Buddhism was regarded as *nirisvara* or atheistic, *Mahāyana* practically installed the Buddha on the throne of God as an *avatāra* Sanskrit was adopted as the language of this neo-Buddhism, instead of Pāli Images of the Buddha also came to be worshipped and something like the Brahmanical ritual was gradually introduced Thus, the difference between Hinduism and Buddhism was reduced to the minimum This was due partly to the increasing pressure of Brahmanical revivalism and partly to the large admixture of foreigners in Indian society These two powerful influences are symbolized in the names of Pushyamitra Sunga and Kanishka The former signalized his victories by the performance of *Aśvamedha*, which was followed by most other rulers of this period, and the latter, described as the Asoka of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, held a Great Council of the Buddhists, and gave fixity to the new faith, by having its doctrines inscribed on copper-plates and extending to the *Mahāyana* his royal patronage But inevitably, the 'counter-reformation' of reformed Brahmanism or Hinduism swallowed up this 'protestant Buddhism, as is illustrated by the names and coins of

Kanishka's successors The great Kushāna emperor's grandson was Vasudeva, and his coins bore the Saiva symbols of the *trisūla* and *nandi*

The eclecticism suggested by the above was typical of the times Religious toleration is writ large on the brow of the period we are now studying As Hinduism flourished in its new form, Buddhism was gradually absorbed rather than liquidated by persecution Jainism continued to thrive, particularly in the South, under the patronage of rulers who were not always themselves Jainas Nontheless they made very large and valuable contributions to literature and art Their social influence was, on the whole, very salutary They preached *ahimsā*, propagated vegetarianism, fostered vernacular literature erected great images and temples, and morally raised classes of society that had been suppressed by the Brahmanical Hindus But, though they had stood out against caste, in their earlier days, they succumbed to its all-pervading contamination eventually Lingayat persecutions, in later times, were largely responsible for the ultimate disappearance, of the Jainas as a dominating group, apart from their own internal transformation like that of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, making them hardly distinguishable from the rest of the Hindus

The Golden Age of Hinduism Though Buddhism and Jainism continued to exist, and even thrive, side by side—thanks to the liberalism of those spacious times—the period extending from Pushyamitra Sunga to Sri Harshavardhana may be regarded as the great epoch of Hinduism The Guptas occupied a central place in this The conditions obtaining in their glorious empire may be regarded as truly representative of the Golden Age of Hinduism As we have noted before, we have ample evidence of this in the inscriptions, coins literature,

and the recorded observations of Chinese travellers like Fa-hien, I-Tsing and Hiuen Tsang Besides the Buddhist *Jātakas* and writings of the Jainas—particularly in the earlier stages—the Hindu epics and *Purānas* took their final form during this period and they afford us very valuable material for reconstructing the social history of the times Dramas, such as those of Kālidāsa, and historical biographies, like the *Harsha charita* of Bāna, and other secular literature, will be noticed later For our present theme—viz social life—the most important works are the *Dharma-sāstras* compiled by Manu Yājnavalkya, Brihaspati Nārada and others Just as the *Artha sāstra* of Kautilya reflects the atmosphere of the early Maurya period, we may consider that the *Manu smriti* or *Manava-dharma-sāstra* represents the neo Brahmanism of the Sunga period and the *Yajnavalkya smriti* and the remaining *Dharma śastras* embody the social conditions and code of the Gupta age

The Testimony of Manu The following remarks of R C Dutt, on the nature of the Institutes of Manu will serve as a good introduction to the study of the transitional period Manu 'is the last supporter of Vedic Hinduism, of Vedic gods, and of Vedic rites, and he does not recognize the modern Hindu Trinity, and does not approve of the worship of images But when we come to his successors in the next age, we shall find that they recognize the Hindu Trinity and the worship of images The forms of marriage laid down by Manu are the same that we found in the works of the Sūtra writers, and like the Sūtra writers Manu condemns the baser forms The feeling against the remarriage of widows was gaining in strength, and Manu disapproves of the custom although he does not prohibit it, and passages in his work show that it was still prevalent In the same way, while Manu

approves of the marriage of girls at an early age, it is quite manifest, from all we know of the times, that Hindu maidens generally married in early womanhood It would seem that the frequent invasions of foreigners in this age, and the general insecurity of the times fostered the baneful custom of child-marriage, and the custom became a religious duty after the Hindus had lost their independence The more cruel custom of permitting widows to burn themselves on the pyre of their husbands finds no mention in Manu's Institutes "

Apart from the standard of living, which will be dealt with in the next section, what enables us to form an appreciably clear picture of the society of any period of history is (i) the organization of the religious life of the people, and (ii) the degree of freedom enjoyed by the various members and sections of society Under the former head, we will consider here, very briefly, the number of *religious sects* that *existed during the* period of Hindu renascence, and their most characteristic customs, and, under the latter head, we will assess the degree of freedom enjoyed by members of the different castes, women, and slaves

Religious Life From what has been said already, it is clear that the practice of religion was no longer a simple matter, as it was in the early Vedic times Since the age of the *Upanishads*, of Buddhism, and of Jainism, people had begun to think along different lines in matters of religion The influx of foreigners also added to the variety of religious ideas, customs, and institutions Thus, Vedic religion gave place to Brahmanism, Brahmanism, was, for a time, eclipsed by the reforming cults of Buddhism and Jainism, Buddhism itself was, later, split into *Mahāyāna* and *Hinayāna*, Jainism was, likewise divided into *Svetāmbara* and *Digambara* Finally, during

the Gupta and later times, Hinduism, on the one hand, absorbed many of the elements of all the above named sects, and on the other, also gave birth to many new denominations like the Saivas, Vaishnavas, Sāktas or Tāntrics, and so on In all this bewildering variety of faiths, we have to bear in mind the distinction between purely matters of belief, and their effects upon the social relations of several groups between themselves The latter aspect alone is relevant to our present context. The difference in creed, except in rare exceptions, did not come in the way of harmonious relations between the orthodox Hindu and other sections The Gupta emperors, Harsha and the rulers of most of the minor dynasties, extended their patronage to the ascetics, learned men and institutions of all denominations Marriages took place between ruling families, like the Guptas, Vākātakas, Kadambas and Gangas, irrespective of the creeds professed by them. Caste distinctions were, of course, observed among the ordinary people, though they were not so rigid as now Both *anuloma* (the bride being from a lower caste) and *pratiloma* (bride belonging to a higher caste) marriages took place, but the latter were comparatively rare The difference between the Brāhmaras and Kshatriyas, on the one side, and the Vaishyas and Sūdras, on the other, was largely eliminated But the Chāndāla or untouchable class had already come into existence, and its members were expected to warn off the upper class people by making some noise, lest they should contaminate the orthodox by their contact But, despite all these differences, each caste had its assigned rôle in the total life of the society as a whole; and they co-operated with one another by discharging their several functions, without ever thinking of any claim to equality with the others The pattern of popular religion was practically the same for all, though details of the ritual varied with the different sects There were

images, temples, priests, processions and festivities by means of which all men and women, whatever their faith, satisfied their religious sentiments So far as the masses were concerned, the predominant note was one of *Bhakti* or devotion The *Purānas* mainly emphasized this, and Sri Krishna, in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, also assured the devotee *na me bhaktah pranasyati*–'My devotee will never perish' Even the Vedantist Sankarāchārya addressed a hymn to Dakshināmūrti A reference has been made, already, to the great religious assemblies convened by Harsha, every five years, at which he distributed charities with a lavish hand The programme also included the installation of the images of the Buddha, Āditya, and Siva It was also an epoch of temple-building The marvellous Kailās temple of Elura and the *pagodas* or *rathas* of Māmallāpuram are well-known illustrations Others will be noticed in a later section Among the most famous images of South India is the great colossus of Gomata at Sravana-Belgola, in Mysore In its vicinity are also many beautiful Jaina temples, bearing testimony to the influence of *bhakti* on the Jaina community Among the Hindus, the *Bhāgavata* movement was built up by the Appars, Alvars and Sambandhars of South India, with a corresponding galaxy of teachers and saints in the other parts of the country Their influence increased with the advancing centuries

Social Freedom Apart from the relative degrees of freedom enjoyed by members of the different castes, a few specific instances of individual status are also worthy of attention We have stated before that the place assigned to woman in any society is an indicator of its cultural advancement From this point of view, as in matters of religion, there was no uniformity during this

long period of Hindu civilization One of the powerful forces which influenced the status of women in society was the frequency of foreign invasions and the consequent insecurity to life and property These resulted in gradually increasing or tightening the restrictions placed upon women The perfect equality with men which they enjoyed during the Vedic times was denied to them by the Jainas and the Buddhists, inasmuch as women were considered to be spiritually less qualified for salvation. The Brahmanical revival having synchronized with the foreign invasions, liberty once curtailed came to be more and more reduced

Conditions at the commencement of this age are well described summarily by Professor N K Sidhanta thus - "Before marriage in her father's home, the girl was perhaps given some education and taught to dance and sing She was not married very young and the marriage was arranged (a) by the payment of bride price, or (b) by mutual consent, sometimes in the form of an elaborate *svayamvara*, or (c) the bride might be forcibly carried off by the suitor [like Sanjukta by Prithviraj in later times]. Restrictions of caste were not always regarded The wife had to go to her husband s home, where she might have to endure the presence of co-wives as the heroes were often polygamous Polyandry [like that of Draupadi with the Pandavas] was exceptional The sole object of marriage is said to be the desire to have sons, but the element of love is prominent in the heroic stories Forceful women who had influence in state-affairs were not unknown, and women in the Heroic Age proper were probably not secluded It is doubtful whether woman could inherit property in her own right, and even by the virtuous king she is looked on as a mere chattel *The mother is an object of great reverence, both in didactic rules and in the stories* The widow had not

always to die with her husband, but such a death was highly praised Remarriage of widows was not common, but not absolutely unknown

The Heroic Age referred to in the above was that of the *Mahābhārata* It is to be remembered that, though this great epic embodies earlier traditions in its present form, it also reflects the atmosphere of the age we are now describing The transition from the old to the new is indicated by the contradictions in the Institutes of Manu While, on the one hand, Manu states that 'where women are held in great honour, the gods rejoice', he also, on the other hand, speaks of the necessary dependence of women successively on the father, brother, husband, and son, owing to their inability to take care of themselves They could no longer undergo the *Upanayana* like boys, owing to the insistence on early marriage (i e before maturity), by Yājnavalkya and Nārada Women now could not even listen to the recitation of Vedic *mantras* The only share in the family property they could get was the bride money or dowry given at the time of marriage though Yājnavalkya and Brihaspati theoretically upheld the right of the widow to her husband s entire estate, Yājnavalkya and Nārada had no objection to *niyoga*, but Brihaspati was opposed to it While *sati* is occasionally met with in the writings of Bhāsa Kalidāsa and Sūdraka, it was becoming more common with the lapse of time We have noted how Harshavardhana saved his sister, Rājyasri, from the funeral pyre when her husband was murdered by Sasānka But before that, his own mother had died as a *sati* when his father, Prabhākaravardhana, died

Lastly, we may note that, whereas it is doubtful whether slavery existed at all in ancient India, it was coming into vogue in later times This might, again, have been due to foreign conquests and the resulting

unsettlement of social and economic conditions Arrian states, on the authority of Megasthenes, that all Indians were free. "Not one of them is a slave, the Indians do not use even aliens as slaves, and much less a countryman of their own"

When slavery came, in later times, the conditions in India were easier for the slaves than elsewhere: they could purchase their freedom for a fixed price Nārada mentions the ceremonial by which a slave was manumitted the master removed a pot from the slave's shoulder and smashed it on the ground, then water containing gram and flowers was sprinkled over his head, and the slave was declared to be a free man, three times Nevertheless, the caste-slavery of the Chāndālas continued and grew worse in course of time.

Economic Conditions The economic life of a people is from many points of view of basic importance Most other aspects of civilization and culture are dependent upon it: society, politics, art, literature, religion, and even the intellectual life, are all rooted in it and vitally influenced by the economic organization of a community. This has come to be realized more and more in recent times Our economic history really begins in the Neolithic age for then, the key-discoveries and inventions were made by our primitive ancestors These were the use of fire, the birth of agriculture, the art of weaving, and the invention of the wheel The domestication of animals, the discovery of metals, and the manufacture of pottery, were other important features of the earliest stage of civilization The construction of huts or houses —i e artificial shelters—is to be presumed to have been known from times immemorial. From these elementary discoveries to later economic developments was a far cry; but few other countries can point to such a steady

growth—stage by stage—of economic life as we find in the history of India The economic conditions of Mohenjo daro are a very great landmark from this point of view.

Civilization is a term which literally means 'urbanization' or the creation of cities Mohenjo-daro was one of the earliest cities built by man Its total burial and subterranean preservation is one of the marvels of history. Thanks to the spade of the modern Indian archaeologist, we have been enabled to form a very concrete picture of the life of the Indus people, particularly from an economic point of view Though iron was not known to them, nor the use of the horse among domesticated animals, their culture was advanced enough to have a remarkably high standard of living The most striking aspect of this was the construction of a scientifically planned city with an excellent sanitary and drainage system and well-built brick-houses The mere enumeration of some of the finds of Mohenjo-daro will denote the economic progress made by Indians nearly 5,000 years ago They used pottery and vessels made of clay and porcelain—painted, glazed and unglazed, and also of copper, bronze and silver Mirrors were made of polished bronze. Cotton and wool were used for fabrics worn by men and women Their ornaments included fillets, armlets, anklets, bangles, girdles, finger and ear-rings, and nose-studs and neck-laces These were made from copper, silver, gold, ivory, and precious stones like agate, jade, carnelian, crystal and *lapiz lazuli* The existence of toy-carts and toy-chairs warrants the inference that their originals were in actual use among the Indus people The remains of skeletons of the humped-bull, buffalo, sheep, elephants and camel, show that these animals were domesticated. Their weapons were the knife, dagger, axe, spear, mace and slings, very few bows and arrows have been found,

and definite owing to the additional light thrown by Kautilya's *Artha-sāstra*, and the testimony of the Greeks. We must, however, be cautious in drawing our conclusions, as we cannot be quite sure as to how much of the *Artha śāstra* is theoretical or idealistic and how much of it descriptive of the actual conditions obtaining in the Maurya empire, when it came to be written Nevertheless, we can form a fairly reliable picture, putting together all our sources including among them the valuable Pālī texts On the whole, we might truly compare the spacious life of the Maurya age to the broad expanse of the sea, compared with the narrow streams of the earlier times Life had also grown deeper and richer The geography of Kautilya is no longer confined to the Indo-Gangetic river-basins and the Deccan, but reaches down to the whole of South India as well

In reviewing the administrative organization of the Maurya empire, we witnessed the existence of various boards and committees which looked after trade, weights and measures, foreigners etc. That indicated that life was no longer simple but required more elaborate regulation by the Government Consequently, under the Mauryas, we find that the State really looked after many more things than we can imagine now Besides having its monopolies in salt, mining and forest-produce, Government regulated agriculture, industries and trade—both internal and external. It looked after irrigation works and provided subsidies to farmers, helping them particularly in times of famine The trade-routes described in an earlier paragraph were now greatly expanded, and they ran down to the tip of the southern peninsula, on account of the trade in the fine fabrics of Madura, the pearl-fisheries of the Tāmraparni, the sandalwood of Mysore, and the ivory and elephants of Ceylon The number and variety of the precious metals and stones mentioned by

Kautilya is very much larger than was known in earlier ages The professions of craftsmen were also more diversified and organized in a larger number of guilds Villages, gardens and fields, were now all classified according to their produce and the class of workmen who lived in them The prices of several commodities and the wages of certain workers were regulated

From the list of amusements and the provision made for their enjoyment, mentioned in the contemporary sources, we can gather that the standard of living was very high. These included music, dancing and theatrical performances. There were also places provided for public dinners The food was both vegetarian and non-vegetarian, but wine was generally eschewed The villagers joined together in organizing public festivities As Professor R K Mookerji has observed "Village life was built up on the basis of private property, security of life and property, communications and public works" Foreigners have testified to the prosperity of the country as well as the honesty of the people Megasthenes has observed: "Famine has never visited India and there has never been a general scarcity in the supply of nourishing food The inhabitants having abundant means of subsistence, exceed in consequence the ordinary stature, and are distinguished by their proud bearing They are also well skilled in the arts, as might be expected of people who inhale a pure air and drink the very finest water". He further states: "While the soil bears on its surface all kinds of fruits which are known to cultivation, it has also underground numerous veins of all sorts of metals, for it contains much gold and silver, and copper and iron in no small quantity, and even tin and other metals, which are employed in making articles of use and ornament, as well as implements and accoutrements of war" The people were well-dressed, and Nearchus remarked "They wear ear-rings of

ivory, and shoes of white leather, very elaborately worked, and high-heeled so as to make the wearer seem taller". Arrian noted, about the mode of conveyance "The animals used by the common sort, for riding on, are camels and horses and asses, while the wealthy use elephants—for it is the elephant which in India carries royalty The conveyance which ranks next, in honour, is the chariót and four; the camel ranks third, while to be drawn by a single horse is considered *not a distinction* at all"

In the Gupta and Later Times What has been said already, about the economic conditions in ancient India should suffice to acquaint the reader with the steady progress made, during successive ages, in the organization of trade and industry as well as the standard of living of the people. The nature of the foreign trade of India which brought in great wealth will be dealt with in a later section Within the country, a number of centres of civilization and economic activity connected by a network of roads, had come into existence These included Taxila, Ujjaini, Mathurā, Prayāga, Benares, Gayā, Vaisāli, Pātaliputra, Tāmralipti, etc in the Gupta empire, and cities of the peninsula, like Broach, Kalyāni, Banavāsi Badami, Korkai, Kāñchi, etc A mere inventory of their articles of luxury will show that they must have been produced and distributed all over the country, and also exported to distant lands beyond the seas Professor R C Majumdar, for example, has compiled the following catalogue of some of the things used in ancient India

> 'The literature of the period,' he writes 'contains abundant evidence of the luxury of the people We read of fine buildings several storeys high, of brick, stone or wood, with fine carved railings of the same materials, rooms with coloured walls and painted frescoes covered terraces, and over hanging eaves bath rooms of stone and brick, with antechambers, fire-places,

chimneys and cells to be used as cooling rooms after a steam-bath rectangular chairs raised chairs cane or straw-bottomed chairs, beadsteads of equally varied character, with carved legs, representing feet of various animals slippers of blue, yellow, red, brown, black and orange colours shoes with edges of the same variety of colours having double, treble, or manifold linings and adorned with lion skins tiger-skins, panther-skins antelope-skins cat skins squirrel-skins, and owl skins laced boots boots lined with cotton, of various hues, like the wings of partridges, boots painted with ram s and goat s horns, ornamented with scorpion s tail and sewn round with peacock's feathers, shoes made of grass or of the leaves of the date-palm, or of wool and ornamented with gold silver, pearl, beryl, crystal, copper, glass, tin lead or bronze, jewels and precious stones like diamond, ruby etc used as ornaments by men and women, and utensils made of gold and silver

We will close this survey of the economic conditions with a few remarks on the rôle of the guilds which made all this economic progress possible 'Contemporary inscriptions and seals refer to the guilds not only of merchants and bankers, but also of the manual workers like weavers, oil-men and stone-cutters ..In order to secure capital, they were also doing banking business and receiving permanent deposits guaranteeing regular payment of interest to be utilised for the specific charitable objects which the donors had in view Even if the members of the guild migrated in a body to another place offering better trade prospects, the public had full confidence that they would honour their obligations The peace and prosperity that prevailed in our age gave a great impetus to inter-provincial and inter-state trade, and it had its own repercussions on the development of the guilds Guilds were autonomous bodies, having their own rules, regulations and bye-laws, which were usually accepted and respected by the State Disputes among their members were settled by their own executive and not by the State tribunals They had their own funds and properties,

Many of them were rich enough to excavate a cave or build a temple It would appear that, in case of emergency a guild could raise a militia from among its own members and employees to afford protection to the person, property and merchandise of its members '

Art and Architecture Man does not live by bread alone Mere economic activity or prosperity does not, therefore, satisfy him fully The rich man may not necessarily be a man of culture. But wealth does foster culture, and without it the arts cannot thrive. In fact, our great poet Rabindranath Tagore has pointed out that Art grows out of abundance When we have satisfied our primary needs we utilize the surplus as luxuries or articles that yield us additional pleasure A thing of beauty is, indeed, a joy for ever ! The instinct of aesthetics or sense of the beautiful is deeply rooted in man It makes him crave for personal adornment as well as the beautification of his environments. We find this trait in the most primitive savage no less than in the most civilized person Hence, the history of Indian art begins in the earliest times We will trace it from Mohenjo-daro

Art in the Indus Valley · For the sake of brevity we will use the comprehensive term 'Art' to include Architecture as well Ordinarily, arts are divided into 'useful arts' and 'fine arts' the former would include carpentry, pottery, weaving, etc , and the latter, painting, music, dancing, sculpture, etc The art of the jeweller and the brocade-designer is difficult to assign Likewise, Architecture has an aspect of beauty as well as utility. Here we will consider all branches of art appealing to the aesthetic sense of man But it is obvious that not all arts are capable of being made vivid to the reader through the medium of mere words. For instance, the music and

dancing of past ages cannot be recreated without the aid of several other mediums of expression. Painting, sculpture and architecture are at least capable of being pictorially illustrated to some extent.

Apart from scattered specimens of primitive art, chiefly pottery, we have our earliest art–in all its forms–best represented in the archaeological discoveries of the Indus valley civilization, at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. The artistic sense and skill of the Indus people is represented by a variety of the finds. We have already referred to the brick-buildings of Mohenjo-daro : they are of varying dimensions, but all of them are models of strength, utility and hygienic construction. We have no space for more detailed description here, so far as architecture is concerned. From a purely artistic point of view, the numerous seals and statues, statuettes or figurines, are far more interesting. Most of the seals are beautifully inscribed, not merely with writing which is yet to be deciphered, but also with a variety of figures which are of great cultural value. The representation of human and animal figures therein is both vivid and impressive. A toy-cart in copper or bronze has been referred to before. There are other toys made of terra-cotta, like the ass with a moving head, as well as human figures made of metals, alabaster or limestone, and excellent sculpture in stone. A specimen in torso and a dancing figurine have been judged by competent critics the best of their kind and age. The art of the jeweller was equally well mastered by the Mohenjo-daro people.

Art in the Vedic and Pre-Mauryan Periods: Between the Indus period and that of the Mauryas there is a great gap in the art-history of India which it is not easy to fill. This is so because hardly any *objects d'art* belong-

ing to these millennia have come down to us If the spade of the archaeologist were to bring to light, hereafter, something new which will supply the missing links, that will serve to enrich our cultural history very considerably. Today we have to leap over the centuries, stepping on a few islands of data supplemented with speculative theories The first question is What kind of art did the Vedic Aryans possess? The *Vedas* reveal a very powerfully artistic imagination, the value of which as literature will be assessed later. They personified natural phenomena, and clothed their gods—like Agni, Indra, Varuna, Sūrya, etc—with human attributes. They were supposed to be riding in chariots, armed and dressed like men. Of Uṣas they wrote: 'She throws gay garments round her like a dancing girl'; and

> 'The Sun pursues the Dawn, the gleaming goddess,
> As a young man a maiden to the region
> Where god devoted men lay on the harness
> Of brilliant offerings for the brilliant godhead
> The brilliant steeds, bay coursers of the Sun-god,
> Refulgent, dappled, meet for joyful praises,
> Wafting our worship, heaven's ridge have mounted,
> And in one day round earth and sky they travel'

Nothing could be more concrete in its imagery than this Then, did they make images or sculptures to give shape to these mental pictures? Scholars are not agreed among themselves about this matter The Dāsas were described by the Vedic Aryans as worshippers of the 'siśna-devas' Did the Dravidians worship the phallus-god so early in our history? But archaeological evidence tarries far behind. An early work on *Chitra-lakshana* now exists in a Tibetan translation, but its precise antiquity is difficult to ascertain According to informed opinion, 'funerary statues seem to have been characteristic of Indian civilization from the age of the earliest surviving

monuments onwards' The oldest sculpture we possess is that of Kunika Ajātaśatru (now in the Mathura Museum), who died *c* 618 B C In the Calcutta and Patna Museums are other specimens of the period immediately following this, representing a *yaksi*, a female chowri-bearer, and the two Saisunāga kings, Udayin and Nanda Vardhana

Maurya and Buddhist Art Art really begins to grow great during the Maurya and Buddhist periods In the beginning the ascetic ideal seemed to act like a dead weight. The *Mārkandeya Purāna*, for instance, declared that 'nothing should be done by a Brāhmana for the sake of enjoyment'. Chānakya classed musicians and dancers with courtesans; and Manu forbade the house-holders to indulge in these arts According to him archi-tects and actors were not worthy of being invited to attend sacrifices. But a great civilization could not exist without producing great art in all its forms Much of what was produced in those early times has been lost probably because wood was largely used where, in later times, stone was used The descriptions of Pātaliputra, by eye-witnesses from Megasthenes to Fa-hien, make this abundantly clear, and the inference is also confirmed by the more recent excavations of the palace of Aśoka, few parts of which, made of wood, survived. On the other hand, we have in the Aśoka pillars with their sculptured capitals—like the famous one of Sārnāth—and the great *stūpa* at Sānchi, lasting monuments of Mauryan art at its best The magnificent railings, both in Sānchi and in the Lomas *rishi* cave in the Barabar hills (near Bodh-Gayā), are stone replicas of carvings originally executed in wood Sculptured stone railings were, in fact, a characteristic of this period, though they also continued to be made in later times; but the vogue was diminishing.

Though the lion capital of Sārnāth suggests that sculpture in the round was mastered, relief-sculpture largely prevailed in the earlier epoch Art was also more symbolic than natural, and it was long before human sculpture became common When the artistic genius began to bear fruit, it expressed itself with great exuberance, as is illustrated by the numerous *Jātaka*-sculptures As Dr A K Coomaraswamy has observed . " The Jātaka reliefs are excellent pieces of condensed story-telling, the representation of trees and landscape full of interest and decorative beauty, the animals and human figures well understood or placed, whether singly or in groups " The sculptures of Sānchi, in their existing form, are a legacy of the Āndhras (1st century B C), and they ' present a very detailed and animated picture of Indian life, invaluable to the student of culture, even apart from their value as art "

In the earlier stages, when art was symbolic, the figure of the Buddha was conspicuous by its absence. For instance, at Barhut, the Nativity or Birth of the Buddha is represented by the figure of Māya Devi, with two elephants pouring water from inverted jars—a picture of the new-born child, but the child itself is not seen. (Incidentally, this is considered the prototype of the Hindu sculpture of Gaja-Laxmi appearing a little later) It is difficult to say categorically whether image-worship was first introduced by the Buddhists or the Brahmanical Hindus But images were coming into vogue among both, and this at a time when foreigners had been pouring into India for centuries It is, therefore, argued by some scholars that, at least a particular type of the image might have been introduced by the invaders We cannot enter into these controversies here Suffice it for us to note that a school of sculpture, known as the Gāndhāra

school, existed during the earlier centuries of the Christian era. But competent critics are of opinion that it influenced only a part of India; and that too not permanently or vitally. Indian art has remained *national* in all its essential characteristics, during most of the time. The advent of the *Bhakti* movement certainly accentuated image-worship, followed by temple building on a large scale as the centuries advanced. Later Hindu art and architecture were the fruits of this, born with the *Mahāyāna* and attaining their culmination in the Gupta period and after.

The Golden Age of Indian Art: Under the Guptas and their successors, down to the early Middle Ages, we have a period of efflorescence of our national genius in all its aspects. We will here consider only its artistic side, reserving other aspects for later consideration. Chronologically, we will understand by this Golden Age, practically the first ten centuries of the Christian era. It is obvious that this is too vast a range in time to be easily covered, and if we remember that we have also to take into account different varieties of art in all parts of this vast country, the difficulty of the task may be well appreciated. However, avoiding all controversies, technicalities and details, we will attempt to give a simple outline, in order to complete our picture of artistic India.

We will not dwell on music and dance, for reasons already stated; though, in passing, we may remark that these have remained always a very important part of our culture. We have reminders of this in the seals and figures of Mohenjo-daro, in the compilation of the *Sāmaveda samhitā*, in the accomplishments of the Gupta emperors like Samudragupta and Chandragupta Vikramāditya, and in their coins, paintings and sculptures, spread over various parts of the country. We will confine our

attention here only to Painting, Sculpture and Architecture

Indian Painting The history of Indian painting reaches back to neolithic times. At Singhapura in Raigarh State (C. P) there is a group of drawings in red pigment, depicting hunting scenes which do not compare ill with the earliest of their kind to be found anywhere else in the world. But the first datable painting is that in the Jogimāra cave on Rāmgarh hill in Sirguja State (C. P.) It belongs to the first century B C However, the most renowned of the Indian paintings are the frescoes of Ajanta, in Hyderabad (Dn), Sigiriya in Ceylon, and Bagh in Gwalior State It is interesting to note that, according to tradition, the first Indian painter we know of was a woman named Chitralekhā Paintings are also referred to in our literature, as in the *Rāmāyana* and the Buddhist *Vinaya Pitaka*. The Tibetan historian, Tarānāth, traces the history of Indian painting from before the time of the Buddha, and he attributes the earlier works to the Yakshas and the Nāgas Vātsyāyana, who lived in the third century A.D , refers to the *Sadānga* or 'Six limbs of Painting,' which indicates great technical study of the subject Another work of antiquity dealing with this art is the *Chitra-lakshana* which we have alluded to before.

Since the Ajanta paintings cover a long range of time—the 1st to the 7th century A. D.—and also represent the highest quality ever achieved in ancient India, we might dwell on their artistic merits a little. There are no fewer than twenty-nine rock-hewn caves at Ajanta, out of which sixteen were found painted when they were first discovered in 1879 But so rapid has been the deterioration, that the frescoes in only six of them have now survived : Nos. 1, 2, 9, 10, 16 and 17. Of these Nos.

1 and 2 are the latest (626–28 A D), and 9 and 10 are the earliest (*c* 100 A D) "The characteristic features of these early frescoes of Ajanta,' writes Mr Percy Brown, "are a simple, bold style of painting emphasized by a spirited and vigorous outline The scenes are well composed, some of the individual figures are very skilfully drawn, and the expressive treatment of the hands is noticeable The scenes throb with vitality and action, and, although fundamentally religious, they reveal an interest in secularism which is distinctly marked' These exquisite productions have influenced art not only in India but in the entire eastern world

Indian Sculpture and Architecture Sculpture may be in relief or in the round it may be also either mural or detached Its motifs vary from the natural life—human animal and vegetable—to artificial patterns We have all sorts of sculptures in India, dating from at least the Buddhist age Icons or images—not necessarily religious—of course, as we have witnessed, come down from the Mohenjo-daro period Some of the sculptures of the Buddhist epoch, like those of Sānchi and Barabar have been referred to already Other examples are to be met with in Ajanta, Elura, Amaraoti, and the famous temples of Bādami, Halebid, Tanjore, etc In most of these cases, sculpture has become a handmaid to architecture, and most of the extant illustrations of architecture are religious Examples of secular building that we possess, like the palaces of medieval India belong to times later than what we have set out to study here

Rothenstein a very eminent artist of Europe, has remarked 'On the hundred walls and pillars of these rock-cut temples a vast drama moves before our eyes, a drama played by princes and sages and heroes, by men and women of every condition, against a marvellously

varied scene, among forests and gardens, in courts and cities, on wide plains and deep jungles, while above the messengers from heaven move swiftly in the sky From all these emanates a great joy in the surpassing radiance of the face of the world, in the physical nobility of men and women, in the strength and grace of animals and the loveliness and purity of birds and flowers and woven into the fabric of material beauty we see the ordered pattern of the spiritual values of the universe" This characterization applies to the world of beauty created by Indian artists in all the three fields of painting, sculpture and architecture In Ajanta we have the best synthesis of these varied froms of artistic expression. The best specimens of detached sculpture are represented by the Sārnāth image of the Buddha and the Sultanganj copper image (7½ ft high) of the Enlightened One of the Buddhists, the unique colossus of Gomata (about 57½ ft high), in Mysore, of the Jainas, and the rare image of Brahma in copper or bronze, found near Mirpurkhas and now placed in the Karachi Museum, representing Hindu iconography Elephanta, near Bombay, has perhaps the best group of Brahmanical sculptures found anywhere in so small a compass On a larger scale there is nothing to match the combination of sculpture and architecture which we find in the Kailās temple of Elura excavated in a hill Its central shrine alone measures 164 ft in length, 109 ft in breadth, and 96 ft. from the ground to the top It is lavishly sculptured all over, inside and out, with figures and scenes from the *Purānas* Another striking group of rock-cut temples is that of Mamallāpuram or Mahābalipuram in the Pallava country. Apart from sculpture, the *sikhara* characterizes the northern temple-architecture, and the *vimāna* and *gopuram* of several storeys, tapering towards the top, are a marked feature of the South Indian temple A work entitled

Mānasāra, written early during the period surveyed by us, deals with the technique of the arts illustrated above

Education in Ancient India Education is a subject of vital importance to every age Educational institutions are the nurseries of culture wherein the best of the old learning, arts and industries are conserved as well as developed It is clear, therefore, that people of every generation, whether we have recorded information about them or no, take care to train the younger members of the community in their accepted ways of living It will, indeed, be very interesting to trace the history of educational efforts and institutions during the various periods surveyed by us in the preceding pages But this cannot be done within the limited space at our disposal in this little book We will, therefore, merely characterize in general terms the educational system of ancient India, without going into too many details

While describing the social conditions, we have already referred to the *Varnāśrama* organization and the *Dharma* that was prescribed for each *varna* and *āśrama*. Though, in course of time, many changes came into that ancient system, the essential elements and features continued unchanged through several centuries Even when the number of castes and sects multiplied, the ideals of education, the methods of training the young, and the institutions wherein that training was imparted, remained much the same for most members of society We may broadly divide the teachers into two classes. (a) *Gurus*, and (b) Master-craftsmen These were either individuals teaching in their own private homes or organized into Universities and Guilds While the former mainly looked after intellectual training or liberal education, the latter took care of the practical arts and crafts While the one was largely academic, the other

was severely professional. Teachers of both sorts followed their vocations hereditarily, as a general rule There were detailed rules and conventions to regulate the conduct of the teachers as well as the taught Though generally, pupils made the choice of their studies and teachers, according to their respective family or caste traditions, there was nothing to prevent them from changing over to new avenues The most famous centres of learning were Taxila (Takshaśilā) near Peshawar Valabhi in Gujarat, Ujjaini in Malwa, Kāsi or Benares, Nālandā in Bihar, and Vikramasilā in Bengal There were similar centres in the Deccan and South India as well, like Nasik, Vaijayanti, Mānyakheta, Kalyāni, Kānchipura, etc Most of them were non-sectarian teachers and pupils were attracted by learning alone, and they came from all parts of the country as well as abroad Hiuen Tsang's description of Nālandā may be regarded as typical

> 'In the establishment were some thousand brethren, all men of great learning and ability several hundreds being highly esteemed and famous the brethren were very strict in observing the precepts and regulations of their order learning and discussing they found the day too short day and night they admonished each other juniors and seniors mutually helping to perfection Hence foreign students come to the establishment to put an end to their doubts and then become celebrated and are treated with respect wherever they go'

The subjects taught included grammar, logic, philosophy, as well as, medicine, surgery, archery, and the *silpa-sāstras*, etc The famous surgeon Jivaka frequently mentioned in the Buddhist literature, and the renowned Sanskrit grammarian Paṇini, both studied and taught at Taxila Silabhadra was one of the greatest teachers of Nālandā The intellectual freedom enjoyed by women like Gārgi and Maitreyi, in the earlier times, appears to

have been denied to their sisters during later ages, with the general deterioration of social conditions However, in the homes of the higher or richer classes, they continued to receive cultural education especially in royal families Prabhāvatiguptā of the Vakātaka family and Rājyasri of the Vardhana family are illustrations of this

Religion, Philosophy and Literature It may be recalled that by 'culture' in its concrete manifestations, we understood (i) the social life, (ii) the economic activities, (iii) art and (iv) intellectual life The first two indicate to us 'the way of living,' and the latter two 'the outlook on life' together they constitute the very stuff of which culture is made We also described education as 'training in the art of living,' which includes earning 'a living no less than understanding the 'purpose for which we seek to live' In ancient India they had one comprehensive term which implied both these aspects of culture viz the practical and the ideal that word was DHARMA It was for the fulfilment of this that the *Varnāsrama* system had been organized As the *Bhagavad-Gītā* explains it, the two principles on which the *Chaturvarna* rests are *guna* and '*karma*' It is the *dharma* or duty of every one to fulfil the purpose for which he or she is born, in accordance with his natural 'genius or inborn character, and through following a vocation which can best express that genius The *summum bonum* of life is expressed by the word '*Purushārtha* which implies (a) *Dharma*, (b) *Artha*, (c) *Kāma*, and (d) *Moksha* The fullest realization of life's purposes requires a balanced attitude towards all these four objectives That way one would satisfy all the elements that exist in the composition of human personality, and at the same time discharge all the obligations which the individual owes to society Everything is bound and regu-

lated by law which is called *Dharma* in human relations, and *Rita* in the cosmic universe Both atoms and individuals are parts of a unified whole, or in the language of philosophy . the macrocosm and the microcosm are ONE in reality ! Our Religion, Philosophy, and Literature are but expressions, through divers ways, of this outlook on life, which is the very root of our culture

Religion has an outer and an inner aspect. The former shows itself in custom and ceremonials, while the latter is brought out by philosophical systems The connexion between the two is more intimate in Indian culture than in any other For us the 'view of life' and the 'way of life' are inseparable Hence, there may be as many ways of living as there are views of life This may appear to make for complete individualism and anarchy , but, as a matter of fact in our civilization, we have achieved the miracle of giving to the individual the greatest intellectual freedom without losing the integrity of the social organization While *Varnāśrama* firmly held the individual within the social pattern, it did not interfere with the philosophy one chose to subscribe to As Dr S Radhakrishnan has beautifully put it "Hinduism is bound not by a creed, or by a common belief, but by a common search for truth. Every one is a Hindu who strives for truth by study and reflection, by purity of life and conduct, by devotion and consecration to high ideals, who believes that religion rests not on authority but on experience Yet there was room in it for those who accepted the final authority of the *Vedas,* as most of the Brahmanas did and continue to do and those who rejected it like the Buddhists, Jainas and Nāstikas While religion was rooted in philosophy, philosophy itself was rooted in experience Both religion and philosophy were not mere theoretical creeds, but forces which governed the actual life of all members of society This made for

the greatest diversity in religion as well as philosophy—all contributing to the total enrichment of our national literature. A survey of this literature will, therefore, involve at the same time a study of all the forms of religion and philosophy as well.

Epochs and Categories of Literature: The subject of ancient Indian literature is too vast and varied for any sort of compressed treatment. Never the less, the picture of ancient Indian culture cannot be complete without some account, howsoever meagre, of that great treasure-house wherein are stored the most valuable jewels of our cultural heritage. Literature is, indeed, the mirror of life in all its colours and phases in all times. Political and general history is reduced to a mere skeleton when it is not made vivid with flesh and blood and life by the magical touches of literature. Even a cursory survey of our ancient literature will, therefore, serve to round off the inadequacies of our general narrative, and convey to the reader some sense of the depth and immensity of the subject.

It is possible to divide our study according to (i) the language of expression, (ii) the dominating religious or philosophical thought, and (iii) the form or category of literature such as *kāvya*; *nātaka*, *kādambari*, etc. It is also possible to look at all these aspects from a purely chronological point of view, and notice the literary productions from century to century. Perhaps, in a brief survey like ours, we may not be able to strictly adhere to any one of these criteria of classification; but we will at least remember them so as to arrive at a clear, if not also a full, picture of the field covered. Our main interest, however, will lie in the subject-matter rather than mere form or ! for that is the real substance of our enquiry.

Broadly speaking, we will find that our literary history conforms to the main epochs of political and general history that we have traced in the earlier parts of this book. It is to be remembered that both life and literature are a continuous process, and the divisions suggested are merely a convenient device of the student. Each epoch has certain characteristics which mark it off from the rest, but it also shares some of the traits of the preceding and succeeding ages, from which it issues and into which it merges, respectively, by imperceptible stages.

Vedic Literature. Our earliest epoch is that of the *Vedas* and the entire literature which displays or discloses the Vedic civilization. We may call it the Vedic literature. It comprises, in the first place, the four *Vedas*: *Rig*, *Yajus*, *Sāma*, and *Atharva*. They have each a *samhitā* portion—which constitutes its main body of hymns—and a portion containing commentaries called *Brāhmanas*, *Āranyakas* and *Upanishads*. The *Rigveda-samhita* alone comprises 1028 *sūktas*, each containing several *mantras*, and all divided into ten *mandalas* or books. The remaining three *Vedas* contain repetitions from the *Rigveda* as well as fresh additions. Most of this is very fine poetry, though in the later portions—particularly in the *Atharva-veda*—prose comes to be used increasingly. The commentaries are mostly in prose with verses interposed. The *Brāhmanas* are ritualistic, while the *Āranyakas*, with the *Upanishads* at their core, are philosophical disquisitions. They together propound what, in one word, is called *Vedānta*, literally, 'end of the Veda'. Nearly 200 *Upanishads*, belonging to one or the other of the Vedic schools, have come down to us. The *samhitās* constitute the *Śruti* or what was 'heard' by the *rishis*, the commentaries are *Smritis* or what was 'remembered'.

The *Brāhmanas*, as their name suggests, were Brahmanical compositions, while in the *Āranyakas* and *Upanishads* the Kshatriyas came in for a substantial share The former represented the *karma-mārga* or 'the way of ritualistic works', while the latter emphasized the *jnāna-mārga* or 'the way of the intellect' Excesses in each case led to strong reactions, and eventually paved the way for the great Reformation of the Buddhists and Jainas But before we pass on to the next epoch, we may cite here a few illustrations of the sublime heights reached by the Vedic Aryans in religion and philosophy, which have found immortal expression in their literature

At first, the simple Aryans worshipped the powers of Nature and personified them under three classes of deities (a) gods and goddesses of heaven (*Varuna, Āditya, Sūrya, Savitar, Vishnu, Ushas, Rātrī*, etc), (b) deities of the atmosphere (*Indra Rudra, Marut, Parjanya, Āpas*, etc); and (c) terrestrial deities (*Prithivi, Agni, Soma, Brihaspati*, etc) Finally, they considered all these as but manifold manifestations of the 'One God who is called by different names!' From the magnificent hymn to *Ushas* we will quote only the first and last verses as a sample of Vedic poetry

'This light has come of all the lights the fairest
The brilliant brightness has been born effulgent
Urged onward for god Savitar's uprising
Night now has yielded up her place to morning

* * *

Arise! The vital breath again has reached us
Darkness has gone away and light is coming
She leaves a pathway for the sun to travel
We have arrived where men prolong existence'

(RV I 113)

The philosophical speculations of the period of transition from the age of the *Upanishads* to that of the

challenging creeds like Buddhism may be represented by the following poser from the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* -

> O Yājnavalkya when at death the man s voice passes into fire his breath into air, his eye into the sun h s mind into the moon his ear into space his body into earth his self into ether his body hairs into the plants his locks into the trees his blood and seed into the waters where then is the man?

Apart from the *Upanishads* there were three other classes of Vedic literature · the *Vedāngas*, literally ' limbs of the *Vedas* ', the *Upa-vedas* or supplementary *Vedas*, and the *Sutras* The first of these ideal with a critical study of language including grammar, phonetics, etc , and other scientific subjects like jyotisha or astronomy The *Upa vedas* cover practical subjects like *āyurveda*, *dhanurveda* and *Śilpa-sāstra* The *Sūtras* are terse compendia dealing with a variety of themes, together constituting the *Kalpa* They are divided into three classes · *Śrauta-sūtras* dealing with ritual, *Grihya-sutras* dealing with domestic ceremonials and the *Dharma-sūtras* containing legal and moral rules for the regulation of human conduct in society.

From the above account it becomes clear that the age of inspiration and creative literature gradually gave place to that of mere compilation and commentary intellectualism now took the place of genius To say this, however, is not to disparage the literary productions of that age When literature was growing in volume and variety, and, what is more important, was marked by the quality of high seriousness and practical ends, it was very necessary to boil it down and organize it, so that people might study it well and master its contents. This is well illustrated by the grammatical *sūtras* of Pānini, the *Mahābhāshya* of Patanjali as well as his

Yoga sūtras Panini may indeed, be considered to demark, in a linguistic sense the Vedic from the Classical times In between the two was the Age of the Prākrits, which synchronized with the rise of Buddhism and Jainism

Prākrit Literature By the time of Gautama Buddha and Mahāvira Sanskrit such as was used in the Vedic literature had ceased to be the spoken language of the people Pali and Ardha-māgadhi had taken its place in the eastern parts of Hindusthan where the reformers now preached There were also other local dialects such as Sauraseni Paisachi and Mahārāshtri, in the other provinces Such among these languages as produced a literature came to be called 'Prākrits' and the rest were known as 'Apabhramsa or a sort of 'deteriorated Prākrit' Even in the age of Classical Sanskrit literature which followed these dialects were used as the media of expression by women and the lower classes Sanskrit being used only by the upper classes Pāli was the main vehicle of the Buddhists, and Ardha māgadhi that of the Jainas, in the early days, later on both of them used Sanskrit and other languages The Jainas made very important contributions to the development of the vernaculars, particularly in South India The great Buddhist Councils convened by Asoka and Kanishka served to give definite shape to the Buddhist literature The edicts of Asoka and the inscriptions of Khāravala provide examples of the use of the Prakrits apart from the writing of books As has been stated before, the chief canonical books of the Buddhists are the *Tripitakas Vinaya-pitaka, Sutta pitaka,* and *Abhidhamma-pitaka* Of the non-canonical books of the Buddhists in Pali the best examples are those of *Milindapannha* and the *Jātakas* These latter are spread over a long period of time extending

from about the third century B C to about the fifth century A D They are of considerable value to the historian as they reflect various aspects of the ancient Indian civilization during that important age *Buddhaghosha* was the most important of the Buddhist commentators He wrote his *Visuddhimagga* or 'Path of Purity' on a single stanza of the *Vinaya-pitaka* '*Sīle patitthaya*' The *Dīpavamsa* and *Mahāvamsa* of Ceylon are also of considerable historical interest The *Thera gāthas* and *Therigāthas* are interesting collections of lyric poetry, on the one hand, and of witty and sarcastic commentary on human nature, on the other They depict the lives of the Buddhist monks and nuns, affording us very intimate pictures

Like the Buddhists, the Jainas too held their Councils in Pāṭaliputra and Valabhi, at which their canonical literature was given definite shape The Jaina *Āgamas* are in Ardha-māgadhī, the language in which Mahāvīra preached his doctrines *Āchāranga* and *Dasavaikālika suttas* are two important works on the monastic life, while the *Panchāstikāya*, *Pravachanasāra*, and *Samayasāra*, of the South Indian Jaina teacher, Kundakunda, are very valuable commentaries on the Jaina religion There is also a considerable Jaina literature in the Apabhramśa dialects which cannot be adequately described here The *Brihatkathā* of Gunādhya, and the *Paumachariu* and *Harivamsha purāna* of Svayambhu, may be cited as examples

An important development among the reformist faiths was that they could not resist the influences of Brahmanical Hinduism which surrounded them like the very air they breathed The result was that, eventually, the 'Counter-Reformation' won *Mahāyāna* in Buddhism was illustrative of this There were similar transformations in Jainism as well The reversion to Sanskrit was an important aspect of this change Its literary effect was that

Sanskrit was enriched by the admission of Buddhist ideology and mythology, and *Mahāyāna* Buddhism was rendered richer and more human under the influence of Hinduism. Something like the Pauranic literature of the Hindus was now produced by the Buddhists as well The *Lalitavistāra* and *Mahāvastu*, contain legendary accounts of the several lives of the Buddha or Tathāgata "The period in which the Great Vehicle took shape, writes an eminent historian, "is dominated by Asvaghosha, who was a contemporary of Kanishka, and took a leading part in the Council which met in that emperor's reign He is one of the most representative figures of India, a musician, a founder of Sanskrit poetry, and a Brahman born who became a father of the Buddhist church Many works have been attributed to him, among which the *Mahāyāna sraddhotpāda* or the 'Awakening of the Mahāyāna Faith' may be considered the most valuable 'If he were only the author of the *Buddha-charita* and the *Sūtrālamkāra*,' says the writer cited above, 'it would be enough for him to have left a deep and permanent mark' The Buddhist *Tantras* are another section of later Buddhist literature which was popular among the masses, particularly in Bengal and Assam but from the point of view of literary art it has little merit It was propagated in China, about 720 B C by two Indian teachers Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra

Classical Sanskrit Literature We now come to the most interesting as well as valuable, part of our survey of ancient Indian literature, viz Classical Sanskrit literature It is vaster, richer, more varied and deeper in its understanding of human life and its problems and interests than any other literature of the world It is not easy to say when 'Classical Sanskrit' began, but we may describe it as post-Pānini in its

genesis *i e not earlier* than *c* 300 B C Without going into the controversies about dates, we may begin with the Epics the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* The former is called 'Ādi-kāvya' or the first poem, and it is said that what is not contained in the *Mahābhārata* is not to be found anywhere *else in the* world. The greater epic in its present form comprises over 100,000 *slokas* The *Rāmāyana* in its original form may have been composed about 500 B C, but it acquired its more familiar shape, now running into about 24 000 verses, about 200 B C The *Mahābhārata*, too, had a *parallel* development, but did not assume its present form and proportions until after the second century A D Macdonell suggests about the *fourth* century A D The original *Rāmāyana* was the work of one poet Vālmiki, whereas the *Mahābhārata* bears the stamp of multiple authorship, though it is traditionally ascribed to Vyāsa (literally, 'compiler')

These two epics *have formed* the bedrock of Indian culture and continue to inspire both the daily *conduct* of our people and all their arts—literary as well as plastic—in India and outside. It is not possible to find room for adequate illustrations in a short sketch like ours, but the following gems may not be *altogether* missed The character of Sri Rāmachandra is thus described in the *Rāmāyana*

'Lives not man in all the wide earth who exce s the
stainless youth
In his loyalty to duty in his love of righteous Truth
Truth impels his thought and action Truth inspires
his soul with grace
And b s virtue f lls the wide earth and exa'ts his
ancient race!

The noble Sītā refuses to stay at home when her husband is sent into exile She protests

> 'For the faithful woman follows where her wedded lord may lead
> In the banishment of Rāma Sītā s exile is decreed
> Sire nor son nor loving brother rules the wedded woman s state
> With her lord she falls or rises with her consort courts her fate
> If the r ghteous son of Raghu wends to forests dark and drear
> S tā steps before her husband wild and thorny paths to clear !

The *Mahābhārata* too is a storehouse of edifying, heroic and noble examples It is an encyclopaedia of ancient wisdom, stories, and moral precepts It is replete with characters like Sibi Arjuna Sāvitri and Sakuntalā The most popular part of the *Mahābhārata* which has moulded Indian outlook and conduct, during successive ages, is the immortal *Bhagavad-Gītā* The Song Celestial as Edwin Arnold translated it ends with the verse

> O Krishna Lord of Yoga ! surely there shall not fa l
> Blessing and victory and power for Thy most m ghty sake
> Where this song comes of Arjun and how with God he spake

The *Purānas* the principal among which are eighteen in number were produced mostly during the period of Hindu revival under the Sungas and Guptas They drew their substance from the great epics, and elaborated it with other material derived from popular traditions They also contain a core of dynastic history, interwoven with mythology, and profusely embellished by poetic imagination and childish fancy They laid the foundations of the *Bhakti* or *Bhāgavata* movement and the popular Hinduism

An English scholar has observed that "It may be said that in amount of 'cleverness per square inch' no poetry surpasses the Sanskrit *kāvya*" That this remark, revealing the potentialities of the language, is equally applicable to prose and poety alike, may be illustrated with reference to the 7th chapter of Dandin's *Daśakumāra-charita* wherein there is a narrative by one who, because his lips have been cut off, uses words without labial consonants, with surprising results, and the ingenious poem *Rāghava-pāndavīyam*, which simultaneously narrates the stories of the two epics in a single composition, to be read 'forwards or backwards' in order to yield the different themes

We cannot hope to do justice to this alluring theme of Sanskrit literature however much we may write Nor is it possible to choose samples that will not do injustice to the authors Kālidāsa, for instance wrote other poems and dramas not referred to by us hitherto Who has not heard of his *Meghadūta* and *Śākuntala*? Their exquisite art cannot be conveyed by a few descriptive phrases. 'For something like fifteen hundred years,' wrote Arthur W Ryder, "Kālidasa has been more widely read in India than any other author who wrote in Sanskrit" Though Kālidāsa is untranslatable, we may catch a glimpse of him in the following stanza on the rains

> The rain advances like a king
> In awful majesty,
> Hear dearest how his thunders ring
> Like royal drums and see
> His lightning banners wave a cloud
> For elephant he rides
> And finds his welcome from the crowd
> Of lovers and of brides!'

Did he not describe the Himalayas as the "massed laughter of Siva! Of the dramatic literature we may

Apart from this religious literature, there is also a vast secular literature in classical Sanskrit It is either entirely in prose, entirely in poetry, or partly in prose and poetry. The wholly poetical works go under the name of *Mahākāvyas*, and the mixed variety is called *Champu. Sravyakāvya* is intended to be recited and listened to, and *Drishyakāvya* is drama to be enacted We will give a few illustrations.

The *Raghuvamśa* of Kālidāsa is one of the best examples of *kāvya* literature and literary art It deals with the family exploits of the ancestors and descendants of the hero of the *Rāmāyana* The best commentary on this exquisite poem is the *Sanjīvani* of Mallināth a *Kumāra-sambhava* is another *Mahākāvya* by Kālidāsa · it deals with the marriage between Siva and Pārvatī, and the birth of Kumāra or Kārttikeya—the god of war. Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya* is a magnificent poem which describes the fight between Arjuna and Mahādeva in the guise of a *kirāta* Comparing the merits of the various writers in Sanskrit, it has been observed

> 'For simile Kālidāsa, for weight of meaning Bhāravi,
> The Naishadha for lilt of words in Māgha are all three qualities'

Sisupāla-vadha is the best known work of Māgha, and it is often called merely *Māgha-kāvya* The *Naishadhīya* is the work of Srī Harsha—not to be confounded with the Vardhana emperor. It deals with the famous romance of Nala and Damayantī

As examples of the prose *kāvyas* we may mention here the *Daśakumāra-charita* of Dandin, the *Kādambari* ascribed to Srī Harsha the emperor (above named), and the *Harsha-charita* of Bāna

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repeat 'We name thee Sakuntala, and all is said' The earliest dramatist of note was Bhāsa whose best known play is *Svapna vāsavadatta* (*c* 200–100 B C) Kālidasa was probably a contemporary of Chandragupta Vikramāditya, and besides the *Sakuntala* he also wrote *Vikramorvasi* and *Mālavikagnimitra* After these we may mention the *Mrichchakatika* of Sūdraka (6th century B C.), and the *Mudrārakshasa* of Vishākadatta (*c* 800 B C.) These are of very great interest and value from the social and political points of view

Among the minor works of great popular interest we may not miss the three centos of Bhartrihari, called the *Satakatrayi Srngāra-sataka Niti sataka* and *Vairāgya-sataka* and the *Panchatantra* and *Hitopadesa* The special value of both these lies in their moral appeal and epigrammatic style Their quintessential character may be illustrated by the following typical verse

'Since verbal science has no final end
Since life is short, and obstacles impend
Let central facts be picked and firmly fixed
As swans extract the milk with water mixed

Scientific Literature There is a department of our heritage which cannot be dealt with here satisfactorily on account of its technical character viz works on philosophy of a scholastic nature, and works dealing with various scientific subjects Yet it is a branch of our study which, on account of its great importance, may not be ignored Besides it has a bearing on our present outlook whose roots in the past have been often overlooked When we have renewed our acquaintance with it, we shall have a more correct understanding and appreciation of our ancient Indian culture than is possible without such knowledge Our scientific knowledge is as old as our philosophical speculations and religious

practices For instance, as A A Macdonell has pointed out "The study of the Vedic hymns early led to phonetic, grammatical, and metrical investigations as well as the beginnings of lexicography Philosophy, developed in the *Upanishads*, was never completely dissociated from theology Vedic ritual, requiring observation of the heavenly bodies, gave rise to the beginnings of astronomy. The construction of the sacrificial altar entailed measurements and led to geometry Many of the spells of the *Atharvaveda* contain the germs of medical science The regulation of sacrificial worship ended in religious science...With this was connected the science of *dharma*, concerned with religious and secular custom, which, gradually leaving the area of religion, developed into an extensive legal literature" Other sciences like *artha śāstra*, *nyāya*, *alankāra*, and *kāmasāstra*, may be regarded as further developments of the beginnings above referred to The main point to be noted is that the scientific aspect of things was ever present to the minds of our ancestors, and there was hardly any field of human experience that was not subjected to scientific treatment.

The basic study of language from all points of view —grammar, phonetics, poetics, lexicography, etc —is illustrative of the thoroughness of method, comprehensiveness of approach, and depth of understanding. This has been acknowledged by all competent scholars— Indian and European—as 'the greatest achievement of Indian science' which has 'rendered eminent 'services to western philosophy' 'The Sanskrit grammarians of India were the first to analyse word-forms, to recognize the difference between root and suffix, to determine the functions of suffixes, and on the whole to elaborate a grammatical system so accurate and complete as to be unparalleled in any other country' Yāska's *Nirukta* was one of the earliest works on the technical study of Vedic

Sanskrit Pāṇini, who wrote his *Sabdānusāsanam* (*Ashtādhyāyi*) before the end of the fourth century, mentions at least ten predecessors in the line By the time of Kātyāyana's *Vārttikas* and Patanjali's *Mahābhāshya* (*c* 150 B C) Classical Sanskrit had taken shape Though other grammarians appeared from time to time, Panini's *sūtras* provided the foundations on which they sought to build To mention a few later works, Bhartrihari wrote his *Vākyapadīya* (*c* 650 A D) which dealt with grammar from the point of view of the science of language. Vararuchi wrote the *Prākrita-Prakāsha* which is the oldest Prākrit grammar extant (not later than Bhartrihari's work), and Kātyāyana (not to be confounded with his earlier namesake) wrote perhaps the first Pāli grammar, entitled the *Kāccāyana-prakarana* some time between 500 and 1000 A D Macdonell states that Vararuchi and all later grammarians 'start from the assumption that Mahārāshtri is the real and best Prākrit because it is nearest to Sanskrit', whereas, the last named Kātyāyana 'differs from others in treating Pālī as an independent language, not as derived from Sanskrit' Of the lexicons, we can find room only to mention the best known viz the *Nāma-lingānusāsanam* or *Amara-kosa* of Amarasimha who was a Buddhist and wrote between 550 and 750 A D. The oldest Prākrit lexicon is the *Paiyalacchi-nāma-mālā* of Dhanapāla (972 A D), and the earliest extant Pali dictionary is the *Abhidhānappadīpika* or 'Lamp of Words' of Moggallana (*c* 1200 A D)

If grammar deals with language as the vehicle of thought, philosophy deals with thought itself It is significant that, in Sanskrit, the word for philosophy is *Ānvikshiki* which means 'science of research,' and its various 'schools' are called *Darsanas* which literally means 'views' (*of Reality or Truth*) *Though the most familiar of them are the six Pūrva*—and *Uttara mimāmsā*,

Sānkhya and *Yoga*, *Nyāya* and *Vaiseshika*, there are eighteen in all described by Mādhava in his *Sarva-darsana samgraha* It will be recalled that we described religion in India as not a 'common belief' but a 'common search after truth' Religion and philosophy, it is also to be remembered, are inseparable in our country In these matters, freedom of thinking was so much valued for its own sake that, in ancient India room was found for both believers in the *Vedas* as revealed gospel and the atheistical *Lokāyāta* of Chāravāka

Where philosophy and religion were not merely matters of intellectual belief, and the utmost stress was laid upon experience, conduct was naturally considered the essence of validity This accounts for the great importance attached to the *Dharma-sāstras* in ancient India The oldest of them were composed between 800 and 300 B C They belong to different 'schools' represented by the names of Āpastambha Gautama, Vasishtha Manu, and so on, and have their foundations in one or the other of the four *Vedas* The *Smritis* of later times were revised versions of the *Dharma śāstras* adapted to changing conditions We have referred to the *Mānava-dharmasāstra* or *Manu smriti* as reflecting the spirit of the revived Brahmanism under the Sungas, and the *Yājnavalkya smriti* representing the social outlook of the age of the Guptas Other *Smritis* bear the names of Nārada Brihaspati and Parāsara

The *artha sāstra* literature relates to a very important department of organized social life, viz politics This term, however was comprehended as including economics and administration *Niti śāstra* is also used as a synonym or restricted to the 'science of the conduct of government Pertaining to the policy of kings it was known as *rajaniti* The *Artha sāstra* of Kautilya is by far the best known in this class of literature, but there are others

like the Kāmandaki *Nīti-sāstra* and the *Nītivākyāmrita* of Somadeva-sūri The last named deals with moral conduct in general as well as politics A man who has not studied science,' according to this writer, 'is blind even though possessed of eyes 'Better is a world without a king he also says, than having a dunce for a king

The range of the sciences dealt with in ancient India was quite wide It included Mathematics as the foundation of all physical sciences, Astronomy reaching up to the heavenly bodies *Silpa sastra* or *Vastu vidyā* coming down to earth to build homes for men, *Āyurveda* to keep them healthy, as well as *Kāma-sāstra* to make all happy We can do no more here than name some of the more important authors and their works covering the field indicated above 'The most important mathematical texts are the first two sections of the *Āryabhatiya*, the *Ganitādhyāya* and the *Kuttakādhyāya* in the *Brahma-sphuta siddhānta* of Brahmagupta, and the *Lilavati* on arithmetic and the *Bijaganita* or algebra in the *Siddhānta-śiromani* of Bhāskara' The beginnings of geometry go back to the *Sulva-sūtras* of the Vedic period Trigonometry was known to the ancient Indians in its application to astronomical calculations *Jyotisha* was one of the *Vedāngas*. The most famous work on astronomy is the *Sūrya-siddhānta* of Varāhamihira, composed about 505 A D The *Āryabhatiya*, named above, is of equal importance in the history of mathematics and of astronomy Brahmagupta and Bhāskarāchārya were also great astronomers The former wrote in 628 A D and the latter was born in 1114 A D The *Mānasāra*, written about the beginning of the Christian era, contains the 'Quintessence of Measurements' in *Silpa sāstra* Charaka and Suśruta in medicine and surgery are household names in India We may also add to them Vāgbhata and Chakrapānidatta,

who wrote, respectively, the *Ashtānga-samgraha* and the *Chikitsāsāra-samgraha* The oldest extant work on *kāma-sāstra* is that of Vātsyāyana The high ideal kept before the doctors is reflected in the motto of Charaka ' Not for money, nor for any earthly object, should one treat his patients · in this the physician's work excels all other vocations Those who sell treatment as an article of trade neglect the true treasure of gold in search of mere dust.'

V GREATER INDIA

Our knowledge of Indian history has been, in recent times, growing greater in extent as well as intensity Thus the discovery of Mohenjo daro pushed back our antiquity by several millennia Similar archaeological researches across our North-West Frontier have revealed the existence of ancient Indian colonies—both Buddhist and Brahmanical—in Central Asia Work of a like nature in the surrounding Asian countries, has also established beyond all doubt that the contacts of Indians with the external world were far greater than what scholars admitted until recently Though there is still much scope for more intensive research in this and other allied fields of Indian history, we are now in possession of sufficient information to enable us to trace, at least in outline, the history of these contacts, and to present a tangible picture of Greater India We will divide our account into three parts (i) the Western World (ii) the Northern World and (iii) the Eastern World

The Western World The provenance of some articles found in the Indus valley has suggested that the people of Mohenjo-daro had commercial intercourse with the Western world, even in those remote times The European affiliations of the Indo-Aryans are another channel through which we can trace their relations with their western cousins The enterprizing outlook of the Vedic Aryans is revealed to us in a verse of the *Rigveda* which declares : 'Do thou convey as in a ship across the sea for our welfare' That this spirit of adventure grew with the times and that it was cherished through later periods of Indian history, is also borne out by an interesting

inscription in Mysore which speaks of the merchants as 'brave men born to wander over many countries, since the beginning of the *Krita-yuga, and penetrating regions of the* six continents, *by land and water routes*, and dealing in various articles, such as horses and elephants, precious stones, perfumes and drugs, either wholesale or retail'. This trade with the western world was so great, indeed, that Pliny—the Roman historian—complained of the immense drain of Roman gold spent in purchasing articles of luxury from India Our western trade was at least as old as the time of the biblical Solomon (*c* 1,000 B C), and the etymology of several Greek words for articles of trade from India—like rice, cinnamon, ivory, peacock, ape, etc —shows their origin from South India On the other hand, a large number of Roman coins has been discovered in the Tamil districts, which is further evidence of this intercourse Tamil literature also contains frequent references to the Yavanas, some of whom appear to have settled in India Yavana wines, glasses, and lamps, were imported into South India A Tamil poet sings of the thriving port of Muchiri where beautiful large ships of the Yavanas came laden with gold, and went away with Indian pepper 'splashing with white foam the waters of the Periyar river The *Periplus* is an ancient Greek work from which we derive much information of a very valuable character

Tracing this contact from another angle, we have already alluded to the Persian conquest of Western Punjab the service of Indians in the Persian armies that invaded ancient Greece, and the large revenue that Darius obtained from his Indian satrapy The Greek historian Herodotus speaks of the existence of 'gold digging ants in India'! The more continuous and intimate contact, which started with the invasion of Alexander, has already been described That brought a Greek bride

into the family of Chandragupta Mayura, and Greeks, like Menander, adopted the Buddhist faith, and the Gāndhāra school of art was developed Taxila was a centre of trade no less than of learning, and in the fields of medicine and astronomy we were influenced by the Greeks The existence of a *Romaka-siddhānta*, and references to the Romakas and Yavanas in Sanskrit literature, bear testimony to our contacts This intercourse was carried on under conditions of perfect freedom, and hence it was of mutual advantage We have pointed out before how the Indians never made slaves of others (not even of the aliens, according to Arrian) Megasthenes was much impressed by this tradition 'the law ordains that no one among them shall, under any circumstances, be a slave but enjoying freedom, they shall respect the equal right to it of all others' 'Bindusara, father of Asoka, demanded a Greek scholar of the king of Antioch (Syria), and Asoka, sent his Buddhist missions to Egypt, Syria, Cyrene and Epirus, in the third century B C In the first century A D a large number of Jews, fleeing from the Roman persecution, found security and freedom on our Malabar coast, much as the Parsis did in Western India, being driven by the Muslims in later times Thus India has been an asylum of the persecuted from very ancient times She has enriched the world both materially and spiritually

The Northern World The debt that the Western people owe to us, on this account, has been paid back to us substantially by several European explorers and *savants* acting under the patronage of their governments But for their initiative and enterprize perhaps we may not have known of our vast treasures scattered abroad To cite only a few illustrations, we have to think of the wonderful discoveries made in Central Asia by Sir Aurel

Stein, Grunwedel, Le Coq, and others They have laid bare, in the region extending from Afghanistan to Mongolia, a wealth of material bearing on the northward expansion of our civilization and culture, for which we must be really grateful to them for all time We know that under Aśoka, Menander, and Kanishka, we were politically linked up with those countries The present explorations have revealed vast settlements of Indians in Central Asia through which they disseminated our arts, religions and learning among the Mongolian peoples living to the north of our country. We may include among them also the non-Mongolians of Afghanistan, Iran and Eastern Turkistan The lands occupied by these peoples provided a bridge between India and China in ancient times It was through this corridor that caravans of trade, as well as streams of pilgrims, like Fa-hien, Hiuen Tsang, and Kumārajīva, flowed to and fro between India and the northern world There was also an eastern sea-route along which this intercourse with China and Japan was maintained for over a thousand years. We will deal with that a little later To mention only two instances · Fa-hien who entered India through the north-west, returned to China *via* Ceylon and Java, while Samghavarman, a Simhalese Buddhist scholar, went to China through the north-west and returned to Ceylon by the sea route *c* 442 A D

As mementoes of this long intercourse, we will refer to a few relics At Bamiyan, in Afghanistan, and other centres like Hadda Khair-Khaneh, Khotan, etc, a veritable wonderland of Indian culture has been brought to light, since 1922 (the year also of the discoveries of the Indus valley sites), by the French *savants*, Godard Backin, Sylvain Levi, and others This archaeological revelation includes colossal sculptures of the Buddha, monasteries, *stūpas*, caves with frescoes, like

those of Ajanta, Siva and Sūrya temples and images, as well as precious manuscripts of Buddhist and Brahmanical origin, written on birch bark, wooden blocks leather, paper, or silk. Some of the writings have been identified by Sylvain Levi, with the *Abhidharma* texts of the *Mahāyāna* school The art treasures include ivory-carvings recalling the designs of the Mathura school, while the mural paintings are strikingly Indian in *motif* and *character* Of course, Chinese and Iranian influences are also revealed in various other finds Stein divides the Buddhist paintings of Central Asia into five classes from the point of view of their subjects, but Grunwedel has distinguished no fewer than six schools among them, from the point of view of style The frescoes of the 'caves of the thousand Buddhas' are for China what those of Ajanta are for India Besides, they are also examples of the mingling of the Chinese, Graeco-Indian and Iranian elements Of the Sanskrit and Prākrit texts, which have been found in Kharoshti as well as Gupta characters, it has been observed 'These charming compositions are equal in beauty to the heavenly flowers, and the high principles which they contain rival in dignity the lofty peaks of the mountains'

Tibet is another important store-house of Indian cultural finds In the words of Professor U N. Ghoshal: "This land of eternal snow derives its religion of Lamaism and its Lamaist church organization, its religious art and its literature from Indian inspiration if not from direct Indian authorship" Reference has been made before to the Tibetan historian, Tarānāth, writing [illegible] of art in ancient India Many an old treatise [illegible] India, has been discovered in Tibetan [illegible] explorer and scholar, Guiseppe T[illegible] light on the value of the Tibetan [illegible] anybody else. In that *terra incognita*

paintngs, sculptures, *stūpas*, etc , which reveal the extent of Indian influence in corners considered inaccessible to-day Not only are the Tibetan *stūpas* constructed exactly like the Indian ones, but their contents have included figures of the war god Kārttikeya along with those of the Buddha ' Tibet, like East Bengal and Assam, was the home of Tantricism The frescoes of Western Tibet appear to have been executed by Indian artists

The relations between India and China, in spite of the great barrier of the Himalayas, have been both very ancient and continuous So great has been the affinity between the two countries and civilizations that pilgrims, scholars, and even political ambassadors have been exchanged between them from very early times The Indian Buddhabhadra was in China before Fa-hien came to India According to Dr Bagchi, the Kashmiri scholar Kumārajiva was responsible for starting a new epoch in the transmission of Buddhism into China He won in that country an unique reputation for being the best interpreter of that faith He was followed by Gunavarman of Kabul in 431 A D and the Simhalese Samghavarman in 433 A D Soon after, a party of Indian Buddhist nuns also reached China Bodhidharma and Bodhisena went to Japan, in the seventh and eighth centuries The former was well received by the Japanese emperor Shotoku Taishi (573–621 A D) who had the reputation of being the ' Japanese Aśoka ' and Bodhisena taught Sanskrit to Japanese priests in 736 A D The visits of Fa-hien, I Tsing, and Hiuen Tsang are quite familiar to readers of ancient Indian history. In the time of the Chola ascendancy, the Tamils carried on a great commerce with China and the eastern world They sent trade missions, established settlements, and even built Hindu temples on Chinese soil Indian exports

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paintngs, sculptures, *stūpas*, etc., which reveal the extent of Indian influence in corners considered inaccessible to-day. Not only are the Tibetan *stūpas* constructed exactly like the Indian ones, but their contents have included figures of the war god Kārttikeya along with those of the Buddha! Tibet, like East Bengal and Assam, was the home of Tantricism. The frescoes of Western Tibet appear to have been executed by Indian artists.

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to China included cotton fabrics, spices, drugs, ivory, precious stones, coral, incense, etc.

The Eastern World Nowhere else has India left the marks of her great civilization, outside her own shores, to the extent she has done in the eastern world comprising Burma, Malaya, Siam, Indo-China, and the group of islands constituting the Indian Archipelago This entire region is sometimes appropriately called 'Indo-China', because it really represents the meeting of the two countries. India and China If we go into the history of these lands, during the period of our study, we shall find that in Indo-China — in its wider sense — the Indian and Chinese civilizations mingled to produce a harmonious combination of the two The local people who provided the third basic element were not civilized enough to successfully resist these foreign incursions Here we will deal only with the Indian aspect of the mixture of these three cultures viz the native Khmer, Chinese and Indian Our information is derived from all the three sources Apart from Khmer and Chinese accounts and traditions, we have hundreds of inscriptions and not a few manuscripts — mostly in Sanskrit Besides these, there are scattered all over Indo-China and the Archipelago numerous sculptures and architectural monuments — Hindu and Buddhist — which proclaim to the world to this day the ancient glories of a civilization whose hold upon those regions has not vanished even now

The impressive evidence from these eastern lands naturally rouses our curiosity as to the origins of those monuments of Indian activities in the past Their careful study will reveal to us traits which we have been long accustomed to deny to our national character Particularly, in recent times, we have been described by foreigners as a continental, land-locked, stay-at-home

people, lacking the qualities of adventure and enterprize which are generally associated with the maritime nations The history of Greater India supplies the necessary corrective to this perverse picture of the Indians, created from ingorance Indians, until they lost their national freedom far from lagging behind other peoples, were in the vanguard of a dynamic and progressive civilization, at home and abroad They built ships produced articles of luxury, traded with distant countries colonized foreign lands, created kingdoms and empires abroad, which were not less glorious than those they established in India and above all, spread the light of their culture wherever they set their enterprizing feet

Greek works like the *Periplus* and *Ptolemy's Geography*, give us an idea of the trade and trading centres of the Indian Ocean about the commencement of the Christian era. A Sanskrit work called the *Yukti-Kalpataru* describes the technique of building various kinds of ships for inland and ocean navigation , ships for carrying men, animals — like horses, camels, and elephants — and merchandise of all sorts There were also vessels built for pleasure and for warfare Some of them were so constructed in parts that, if one part were shipwrecked the rest of the vessel might continue the voyage intact They were aware of the existence of magnetic rocks under the sea, and built waterproof keels without the use of much iron at the bottom There are sculptures depicting on stone the variety of ships built, and indicative of the load they could carry, including elephants They had a special currency for use during voyages Both the *Artha-sāstra* of Kautilya and the *Manu-smriti* lay down regulations concerning navigation The *prohibition regarding sea-voyages instituted by orthodoxy* in later times evidently did not hamper the Indians who built up Greater India which continued to prosper

during at least one thousand years, before we lost our political and social freedom As a matter of fact, we have in our colonies abroad, a stage of our ancient culture which has been preserved intact to this day, while *in our own* homeland much of it has been washed out or superimposed with alien characteristics Among our cousins in the Archipelago, for example, the hold of caste is not half or rigid as it is with us and their languages have continued to bear a closer impress of Sanskrit than most of our modern Indian vernaculars The social and religious customs are also nearer the historical forms and usages than our own

Thanks to the sources of information indicated above, we are able to reconstruct the history of Greater India, in the east, to a considerable extent This includes the political as well as cultural history, but we will here concentrate more on the latter aspect than on the former. The kingdoms and empires built in Burma, Malaya, Cambodia, Java, Sumatra Bali, etc were not extensions of the Indian dominion, but independent entities, though their builders were Indians On the other hand, the culture of those lands was a direct transplantation from the Motherland This is true of Religion, Art, and Literature, in all of which, we are able to trace a very close relationship between India and her colonies We find there, Brahmanical cults like the Saiva and Vaishnava, no less than the Buddhistic Hinayāna, Mahāyāna, and Tantric denominations In art, the monuments of all these sects seem to vie with one another, enriching Greater Indian culture by their creative rivalries In the field of literature, however, though Pāli is not unrepresented, Sanskrit dominated as the most popular medium of expression The script used in the inscriptions varied from the Devanāgari to the Gupta, Pallava, and Tamil Grantha characters, for the Indian colonists continued to pour in

from all parts of India—particularly from the coastal regions and South India—during nearly a thousand years

Frequent allusions in the Buddhist *Jātakas* reveal to us the great antiquity of this national enterprize The *Jātakas* belong to the centuries immediately preceding as well as following the Christian era Their evidence co-ordinated with the testimony—literary and epigraphic—from Greater India, enables us to visualize the character, no less than the chronology, of the Indian colonial movement. People from all parts of India participated in it, though obviously those in the maritime provinces took the lion's share The names of provinces and cities—like Gāndhāra, Ayodhya, Magadha, Champā, Cochin, and Madurā—tansplanted from the Motherland, supply clues to their builders having come from those places in India Some of the names have undergone a slight transformation in Further India e g Mā Gangā in India became Me-kong in Siam and Cambodia, and perhaps Mo-gaung in Burma "Although the rivers in Bali are named after the sacred rivers in India, viz Ganga, Sindhu, Yamuna, Kaveri, Sarayu and Narmada,' writes Professor R C Majumdar, "the Balinese recognise that those rivers are really in Kling (India), and the water of these Balinese rivers is not regarded as holy. The water is therefore rendered sacred by the priests by uttering *mantras*' 'Kling', though generally used to denote India as a whole, was really a corrupt form of Kalinga (Orissa) which played a very important part in the colonization of Further India The architecture of the period, inspired by Pallava prototypes in India, also points to Pallava leadership, from the seventh to the ninth centuries A D

The entire region of Further India was known to the ancient Indians as 'Suvarna-bhūmi', and the islands were distinguished as 'Suvarna dvīpa Asoka sent his mis-

sions here as well as in other directions It is difficult to say when the earliest Indian colonies were founded and in what particular place It is, however, obvious that the movement first started with a few enterprizing merchants, followed by other adventurers including some disgruntled junior princes of the royal families who felt disappointed in their political ambitions in the mother-country The displacement of vast populations on account of foreign invasions provided the man-power for transplantation on a mass scale, such as we witness in the Punjab today. These included among them, or later on attracted, religious missionaries, scholars, artists, artisans and craftsmen of all sorts, who became the builders of Indian civilization and culture in their new homes In the wake of this national movement arose political powers whose history we may just touch upon rather than describe

At the commencement of the Christian era, or within a couple of centuries thereafter, we see several small Hindu kingdoms in Java, Sumatra, Cambodia, etc They soon became important enough to send embassies to the Chinese emperor, and, not long after, became their political rivals One of these was Fu-nan in Cambodia and Cochin-China Towards the end of the fourth, or beginning of the fifth century A D, it was ruled by one Kaundinya, whom the Chinese accounts describe as a Brāhmana and Indian The people of Fu-nan, they say, welcomed him and elected him king 'He introduced Indian laws, manners and customs' One of his successors, Jayavarman, sent several embassies to China, early in the sixth century, and two Buddhist monks from Fu-nan settled down in China and translated the canonical works Evidently there were both Buddhists and Hindus among the Indians of Cambodia The chief queen of Jayavarman was Kulaprabhāvatī who had a son named Gunavarman After the death of Jayavarman, Gunavarman was killed

by Rudravarman who was an illegitimate son of the late king. Taking advantage of these internal disputes about succession, the king of Kāmbhuja—another neighbouring Indian ruler—conquered Fu-nan, which ceased to exist as an independent kingdom after the sixth century. These events may be considered as typical of the political history of the Indian states in Further India.

There were, however, a few noble exceptions free from the weaknesses witnessed among the less successful kingdoms Among them was Srī Vijaya, in Sumatra, which flourished during several centuries (5th to the 10th) when Indian power reached its high-water mark in the east. Its kings maintained a strong navy, swept the seas of the pirates, and 'ruled the waves' from Ceylon in the west to Canton in the east Inscriptions in India show that they also maintained constant intercourse with the mother country. Their power was brought down after the tenth century owing to the powerful rivalry of the Cholas from India Nearer home, from the eighth century, they had equally strong competitors in the Sailendras Early Arab travellers refer to these latter as 'Zabaj whose king was generally called 'Mahārāja'. Abu Zayd Hasan, writing about 916 A D, says that 'the Mahārāja exercises sovereignty over all these islands', and refers to the curious custom of the king throwing into the shallow lake in front of his palace a gold-brick every day When the monarch died, all that gold was collected and distributed among the members of his family, state officials, and the poor people of the country This is strongly reminiscent of the five-yearly charities of Śrī

Harivarman Indravarman, and so on But we cannot find room for all their local history. Besides, the accounts of some of them, howsoever interesting they might be, do not come within the chronological limits we have set to ourselves Most of them were finally washed out by the coming of the Muslims and Europeans But it speaks volumes for the deep rooted character of Indian civilization in the east that, in spite of the foreign conquest of those regions the cultural achievements of the Hindus and Buddhists survived mostly intact Bali, particularly, still continues to be Hindu as if she were a culturally protected part of Mother India We will close this brief survey of Greater India with a short account of its cultural character and achievements

THE CULTURE OF GREATER INDIA

It has not been possible, for want of space, to describe all aspects of the Indian activities abroad, despite the fascinating character of the subject Though our knowledge of this part of our national history is a comparatively recent acquisition, and much more remains to be learnt, it is full enough to afford us an ample and unmistakable picture of the geographical extension of our civilization and culture Broadly speaking, by 'civilization' we may understand here the material aspects of our achievements, and by 'culture', the intellectual, moral and spiritual The two, of course are closely related and cannot really be separated, except for convenience of study We have so far described only one aspect of the material achievement viz the political Incidentally, we have also stated that commerce must have attracted our people to those distant lands The nature and content of that commerce may be gathered from the allusions already made There is ample evidence in the

inscriptions of the part played in this material advancement by rich corporations of Indian merchants like those of Manigrāmam They obtained charters from the kings and financed great national projects. They also built and endowed temples and other social institutions. Without their munificence and the patronage of generous kings, the mighty and magnificent monuments of Further India may not have come into existence. Some of them are far greater and more attractive than anything that we may point to with pride in our Motherland. By way of illustration, we will here describe only two of the most magnificent structures still existing in Java and Cambodia, viz Barabudur and Angkor Vat

Barabudur is a Mahāyānist *stūpa* in Java, constructed by the Sri Vijaya or Sailendra monarchs, during the century between 750 and 850 A D It is very appropriately described as the highest achievement of the Indo-Javanese art, though scholars dispute the national sources of its features in detail It has been the subject of very close study by Indian as well as foreign experts (Dutch and French), but there seems to be little doubt that it was the product of the mingling of Indian and indigenous genius As Bosch and Krom have put it "The Hindus were the bringers, the propagators and interpreters of the technical texts, but the Javans themselves were the markers of the Central-Javanese shrines" The mighty structure presents a combination of the characteristics of the great *stūpa* of Sanchi and the sculpture of the Kailas temple of Elura Bosch has instituted a detailed comparison between the *Mānasāra* and the architecture of Barabudur Whatever the conclusion which such a study might yield, the *stūpa* in itself is one of the architectural wonders of the world It is a huge monument with a succession of sculptured galleries, rising tier on tier, culminating in the 'simple grandeur of the

Śikhara—the entire plan illustrating the ascent of man unto *Nirvāna* It is based on the Buddhist texts like the *Lalitavistāra*, the *Divyāvadāna*, and the *Jātakamālā* of Āryasūra, but we may not pursue the details here There are in it no fewer than 1500 sculptured panels in the structure, and 432 niches with exquisitely carved images of the Dhāyni-Buddha In the words of Professor R C Majundat "Fine modelling as far as it is compatible with absence of muscular details, refined elegance of features, tasteful pose close-fitting smooth robe, and a divine spiritual expression of face, are the chief characteristics of these figures',

If Barabudur owed its inspiration to Buddhism, Angkor Vat was the product of the Hindu genius This temple of Vishnu is not less massive or less magnificent than the Mahāyāna monument described above Though local tradition ascribes practically all the temples of Angkor to Jayavarman II (*c* 802-52 A D)—supposed to be the son of god Indra — there is evidence to regard Angkor Vat as the work of Divākarapandita the talented Brāhmana minister of Sūryavarman II (*c* 1113-45 A D) Though, chronologically, this takes us beyond the limits accepted by us for our present work, Angkor Vat represents the culmination of Cambodian art which had its beginnings early during the period of our study The scale on which the great temple was built may be imagined from the fact that the moat surrounding its boundary walls is 650 ft wide, and the causeway across it, on the western side of the temple, is 36 ft broad The total length of the surrounding ditch is about two miles and a half. The paved avenue leading to the temple is 1560 ft long, and raised 7 ft above the ground The central tower of the shrine is more than 210 ft above the ground-level, and the first gallery is 800 by 675 ft with a total running

length of 3000 ft The walls and galleries are sculptured with themes from the epics in varying depths of relief marked by a uniform balance, harmony and rhythm of a high order They cover a wide range of human and animal figures which are impressive in their elegant proportions, and the divine figures are distinguished by what critics have agreed to call, the 'Angkor smile,' for want of a more expressive term The French naturalist, M Henri Mouhot, who discovered Angkor Vat in 1860, described it as 'the most wonderful structure in the world, the like of which Greece and Rome had never built' Its builder, Sūryavarman II, also made his reign memorable by the performance of various sacrifices according to the orthodox tradition *laksha-homa*, *koti-homa* and *mahā-homa* The last member of his dynasty, Jayavarman VII, built 102 *ārogya-śalās* (hospitals) well stocked with drugs and other requisites, while the kind-hearted ruler—like a second Asoka—declared in his inscription 'The physical pain of the patients became in me a pain of the soul, and it was more acutely felt by me than by the invalids themselves for it is the sufferings of the State which constitute the anguish of the rulers, and not their own sufferings' This indeed was the spirit of the best of the ancient Indian rulers in the Motherland, and, it is interesting to find, it was also carried into the extended world of Greater India Verily, the spiritual treasures of India are inexhaustible!

The numerous Sanskrit inscriptions of Cambodia, which are noted for their high literary merit, have been brought to light, collected and edited, by a galaxy of French scholars in recent times. A typical illustration of the extent to which the Hindu rulers of Kambhuja were saturated with the spirit of Indian culture is provided by one of the inscriptions of Sri Sūryavarman dated Śaka (1002 A. D) It describes that monarch as

being born in the *Sūrya-vamśa*, and, what is still more striking: 'His feet are the *Bhāshyas* of Patanjali, his hands are the *Kāvyas*, his organs the *Sad-darśanas*, and, the *Dharma-sāstras* are his head'! Likewise, a high Brāhmana official of King Īsānavarman, named Vidyā-visesha, is credited with a sound knowledge of *Sāmkhya*, *Vaiśeshika*, *Nyāya*, and Buddhism Whether it was Saivism, Vaishnavism, or Buddhism, further India was *en rapport* with the mother-country. Art movements, as well as thought currents, seemed to move in an unbroken sweep in both the lands, almost simultaneously. That is why several Buddhist scholars felt attracted to Suvarnadvīpa for a long time. Fa-hien, I-Tsing, Dharmapāla, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra, loved to garner their treasures in Srī Vijaya. We may conclude this brief survey with the observations of I-Tsing on the importance of Srī Vijaya as a halfway-house between India and China:

> 'Many kings and chieftains in the islands of the Southern Ocean admire and believe [in Buddhism], and their hearts are set in accumulating good actions In the fortified city of Sri Vijaya Buddhist priests number more than 1,000, whose minds are bent on learning and good practices They investigate and study all the subjects that exist, just as in India, the rules and ceremonies are not at all different If a Chinese priest wishes to go to the West, in order to hear [discourses] and read [the original scriptures], he had better stay here one or two years, and practise the proper rules, and then proceed to India'

VI. APPENDICES

A. Classified Bibliography

B. Supplementary Notes

C. Maps

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B. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

Historical Literature

It is often said that the ancient Indians were lacking in 'historical sense' and that they produced no 'historical literature'. What then is the meaning of *Itihāsa Purāṇa*—an expression we have used in the text? These two terms are mentioned sometimes together and sometimes separately in the Vedic literature and later. Almost always they are associated with the *Gāthās, Nārāśamsīs, Vidyās, Vākovākyas,* and *Upanishads*, which were all subjects of serious study. *Aitihāsikas* are placed in the same rank with the *Nairuktas* (etymologists) and *Vaiyākaraṇas* (grammarians). The *Amarakośa* equates *Itihāsa* with *Purāvritta* or 'record of past events' *Purāna* according to the same authority (*c.* 5th cent. A. D.) meant the same thing, and had five qualities: (i) *sarga* (original creation), (ii) *pratisarga* (dissolution and re-creation), (iii) *vamśa* (divine genealogies), (iv) *manvantara* (ages of Manus), and (v) *bhūmyādeś-samsthānam* (world geography). Kautilya, in his *Artha-śāstra*, recommends *Itahāsa* as an important study for the princes. In fact, the subjects of like importance were *Itihāsa, Purāṇa, Itivritta, Akhyāyikā, Udāharaṇa, Dharma śāstra* and *Artha-śāstra*. The Jainas maintained *Pattāvalies* or succession lists of their pontifs; and most of the rulers had their *Vamśāvalis*. For example, the Eastern Gangas of Kalinga possessed a *Vamśāvali* dating from 893 A. D. and giving even the coronation dates of at least two of their rulers. Unless they kept family records from day to day, it would not have been possible—as we find in some records—to mention 'the 124th and 143rd day of the 24th regnal year' of the Chola king Rājarāja I;

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and 'the 310th day of the 5th regnal year' of Vikrama Choladeva. The Chālukyas of Vātāpi (Badāmi) ruled from 550 to 755 A D., and the later Chālukyas of Kalyāṇi, from 973 to 1189 A D. In spite of this long gap between them, a record of the later branch, dated *Saka* 930 (1009 A D.), gives the connected genealogy of both the families and mentions the exploits of the earlier *forbears* like Mangalisa, etc There are also other examples of the same type which warrant the inference that historical records—now lost—were *maintained* Of the attempts at compiling these into regular histories we can mention a few instances The core of history found in our *Itihāsas* (*Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*) apart, the *Purānas* contain 'dynastic lists' some of which, despite their fabulous chronology, have been now construed by scholars *in terms* of actual history In the words of H H. Wilson, for instance "After the date of the Great War, the *Vishnu Purāna*, in common with other *Purāras* which contain similar lists, specifies Kings and Dynasties with greater precision, *and offers* political and other chronological particulars to which, on the score of probability, there is nothing to object In truth, their general accuracy has been *incontrovertibly* established Inscriptions on columns of stone, on rocks, on coins, deciphered only of late years through the extraordinary ingenuity and *perseverance* of Mr James Prinsep, have verified the names of races and titles of princes of the Gupta and the Āndhra Rajās mentioned in the *Purānas*" Lastly, we may mention the *Harsha-charita* of Bana, and the *Vikramānkadeva-charita* of Bilhana (dealing with the life of Vikramāditya VI Chālulkya), which are contemporary historical biographies, and Kalhana's *Rājatarangini* (1148-9 A D) comprising the history of Kashmir. "Kalhana", writes Stein, "does not hide from us the errors and weaknesses of the king under whom he wrote,

The undisguised manner in which he often chastises the conduct of those holding influential positions in his own time, makes us occasionally wonder whether he could ever have intended to give publicity to his narrative in his own days. We have seen that Kalhaṇa had personally good reason to feel grateful to his ruler [Harsha of Kashmir] whose favour had raised his family to high office and influence. Yet he dwells at length on all those evil qualities and acts of the king which made his reign so baneful for the land." The high standard, as a historian, which Kalhaṇa set before himself is indicated by the verse thus translated by the late Mr R. S. Pandit: 'That man of merit alone deserves praise, whose language, like that of a judge, has discarded bias as well as prejudice, in recounting the events of the past.'

The Positive Sciences

The achievements of ancient India in the realms of philosophy and religion are universally acknowledged, but few have realized the nature of Indian contributions to the various sciences. It is therefore necessary to draw pointed attention to this aspect of our ancient civilization. It is obvious that our world-famous products of art, industry and architecture could not have been made possible without a basis in some sort of science and technology. Some of the treatises on such subjects or their authors have been already referred to in the section dealing with literature. It has also been pointed out there that in the scientific study of language in all its aspects the ancient Indians were unmatched. Mr Walter E. Clark has observed in *The Legacy of India*: "We know that there was in ancient India a large amount of literature dealing with the practical affairs of life, with technical arts and crafts and with specific sciences.....A people

which was capable of making the Iron Pillar of Delhi and the Sultanganj copper colossus of Buddha, and of hewing out blocks of sandstone 50 ft. long and 4 ft square, carving them into a perfect roundness, giving them a wonderful polish, which cannot be duplicated today, and transporting them over distances of several hundred miles, must have attained considerable proficiency in metallurgy and engineering "

Similar remarks could be made about the chemistry of paints which made the eternal colours of the Ajanta frescoes possible, or about the technique of ship-building which supported the voluminous carrying trade of India across the oceans for centuries Until India lost her freedom completely her ships were built by her own people in her own ship-yards The reader will do well to refer to Dr R K Mookerji's fascinating book on this subject mentioned in the Bibliography

The following remarks of Sir William Hunter on ancient Indian medicine and surgery will also stimulate the reader to follow up his study by going through Dr Brajendranath Seal's *The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus* and such other works as Professor Benoy Kumar Sarkar's *Hindu Achievements in Exact Science* Hunter writes "Indian medicine dealt with the whole area of the science It described the structure of the body, its organs, ligaments, muscles, vessels and tissues The Materia Medica of the Hindus embraces a vast collection of drugs belonging to the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, many of which have now been adopted by European physicians Their pharmacy contained ingenious processes of preparation, with elaborate directions for the administration and classification of medicines. Much attention was devoted to hygiene, regimen of the body, and diet ..They conducted

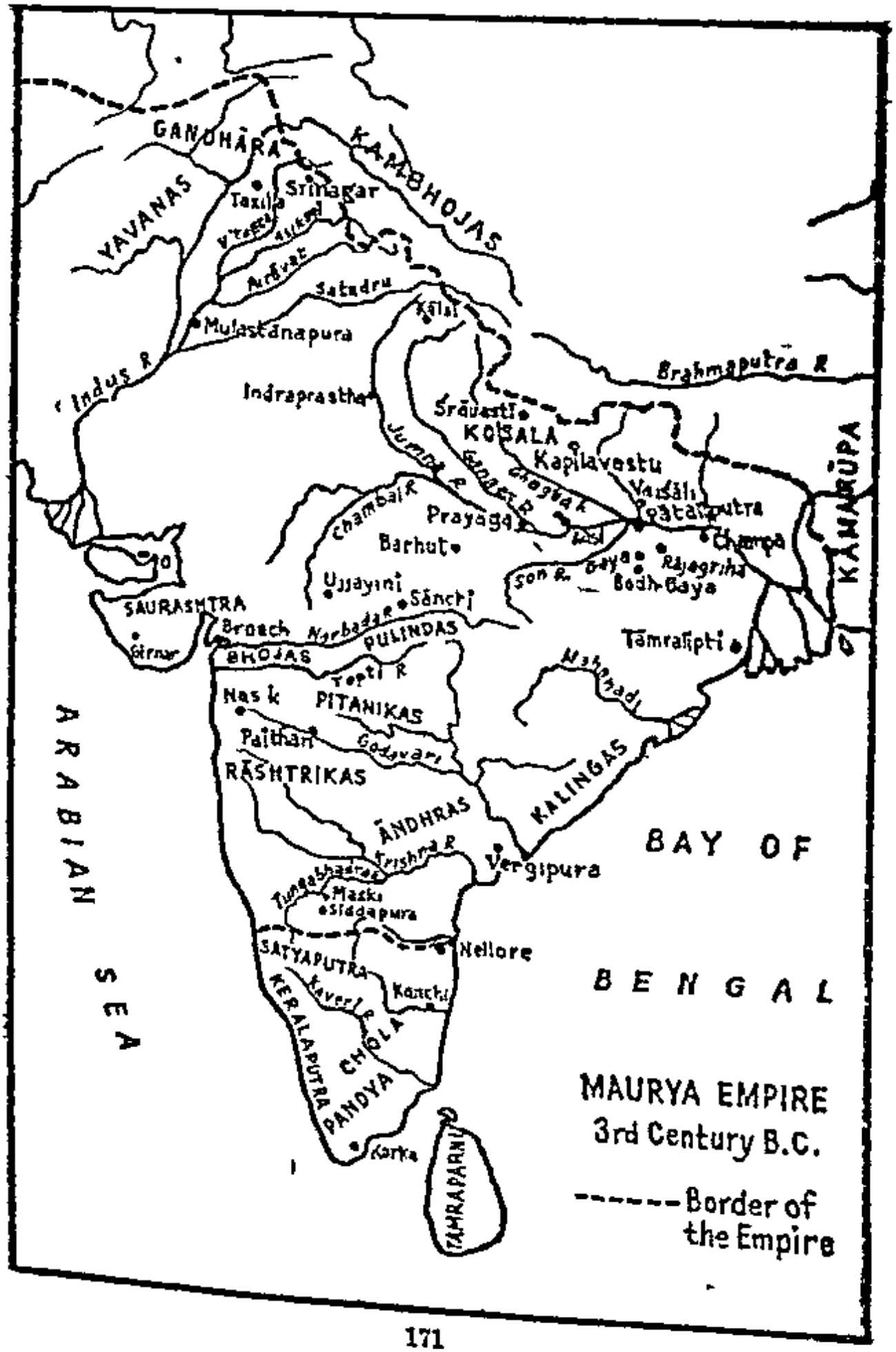
amputations, arresting the bleeding by pressure with a cup-shaped bandage and boiling oil, practised lithotomy; performed operations in the abdomen and uterus cured hernia, fistula, piles, set broken bones and dislocations, and were dexterous in the extraction of foreign substances from the body A special branch of surgery was devoted to rhinoplasty or operation for improving deformed ears and noses, and forming new ones—a useful operation which European surgeons have now borrowed The ancient Indian surgeons also mention a cure for neuralgia, analogous to the modern cutting of the fifth nerve above the eye-brow They devoted great care to the making of surgical instruments, and to the training of students by means of operations performed on wax spread on a board, or on the tissues and cells of the vegetable kingdom, and upon dead animals They were expert in midwifery, not shrinking from the most critical operations, and in the diseases of women and children Their practice of physic embraced the classification, causes and symptoms of diseases, diagnosis and prognosis Considerable advances were also made in veterinary sciences and monographs exist on the diseases of horses, elephants, etc

According to Susruta 'No accurate account of any part of the body, including even the skin, can be rendered without a knowledge of anatomy hence, anyone who wishes to acquire a thorough knowledge of anatomy, must take a dead body and carefully examine all its parts For it is only by combining both direct and occular observation, and the information of text-books, that thorough knowledge is obtained' No better illustration of the scientific attitude can be given

To cite but one example of how scientific observation was not confined to man and his immediate interests, but extended to the whole universe—Aryabhat

(5th century A. D.) noted that 'the starry vault is fixed: it is the earth which, moving on its own axis, seems to cause the rising and the setting of the planets and the stars.'

C MAPS


GANDHĀRA
KAMBHOJAS
YAVANAS
Taxila
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Arrian
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Kalat
Mulasthanapura
Indus R
Brahmaputra R
Indraprastha
Śrāvasti
KOSALA
Kapilavastu
Vaiśāli
Pataliputra
Champa
KĀMARŪPA
Chambal R
Prayaga
Barhut
Ujjayini
Sānchi
Gaya
Rājagriha
Bodh-Gaya
son R.
SAURASHTRA
Broach
Narbada R
PULINDAS
BHOJAS
Girnar
Tāmralipti
Mahanadi
Tapti R
Nasik
PITANIKAS
Godavari
Paithan
RĀSHTRIKAS
KALINGAS
ĀNDHRAS
Krishna R
Vengipura
BAY OF
Tungabhadra
Maski
Nellore
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Kanchi
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ARAL SEA
Khiva
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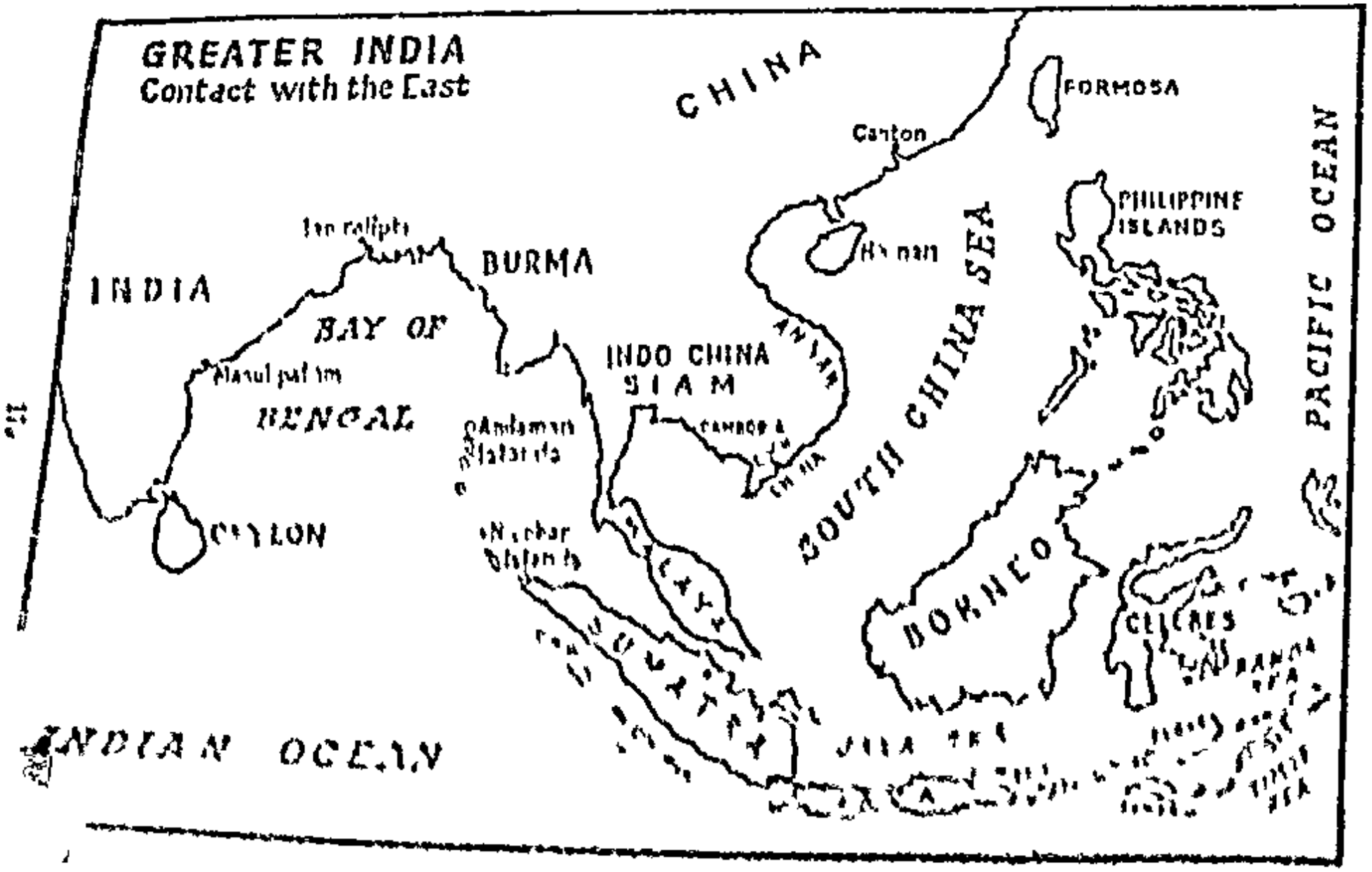
Borders of Kushana Empire
Borders of Western Satraps


GREATER INDIA
Contact with the East
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